

evergreen
t-giving

Window on Jordan

By Farah Qassem
Star Staff Writer

ONE OF the most interesting things to see in Amman are the everpresent queues. They take on a different meaning in Ramadan. And they become particularly glaring right after clocking-off time, when waves of human mass descend on the main intersections in the capital to catch buses and other means of transport to their different destinations.

The Abdalli and Raghdai bus terminals spring to life at around 1:30 pm, when commuters begin shuffling their way to the different bus lanes. By 2 in the afternoon the human traffic is so dense, that it

becomes almost impossible for people to set foot in Al Abdalli area for example.

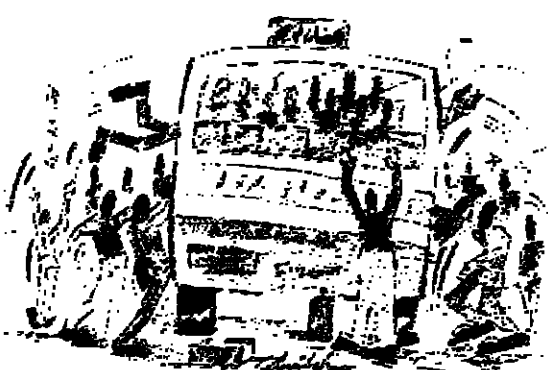
For the next hour and a half, it is sheer chaos. Not only the queues become longer and longer but more hazardous because of the continuing influx of buses that keep dissecting the human trails, right, left and center.

Indeed, this requires the individual to keep vigilant: one eye on the queue to keep his turn, another, on the emerging buses, making sure that both his body and feet are as far away as possible from the buses as they zoom by. On top of that while enduring what seems to be an endless wait, you are constantly harassed by beggars—from different

ages—and street sellers who want to give you anything for a dime or in this case piasters.

Once you think you have reached the tip of the queue, and waiting is at an end, you are confronted immediately by streams and streams of people from the other end. Now you have to watch yourself from different queues from the other side, but there is no time to stand and watch. It becomes the sheer will of survival, you either push forward and scream, or forever lose yourself in the looming exodus. What is frustrating however is that the controllers at the doors of the buses don't seem to mind the queue

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

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AMMAN, 24 — 30 DECEMBER 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 29, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Saddam regains mass Arab support after bilateral aggression

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THE FOUR-DAY US-British aggression on Iraq has stopped for the time being. US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair claimed they had achieved the goals they had previously set for the military campaign.

However, subsequent statements and views made by Clinton suggest otherwise. The president pointed out that his country is willing to support a new leadership in Iraq, and that they are ready to increase their aid to the Iraqi opposition. This statement also proves that the only objective behind the strikes is to go after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Blair said the purpose of the strikes was simply to weaken Saddam and his military forces.

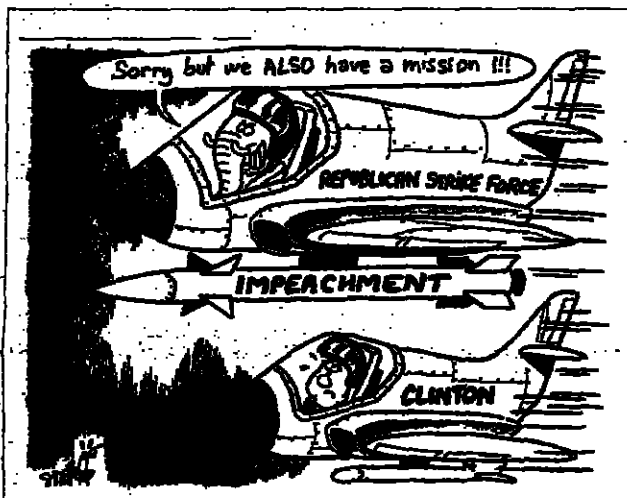
However, political analysts say that the strikes were a ploy for Clinton to save his presidency. It was a last ditch attempt to rescue him from impeachment, but this was not achieved.

"It is quiet obvious that the US-British aggression resulted in a victory for Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people," said Husni Al Shaiyyab, professor of Political Science at the Israa' University.

"The oppressors realized that they are fighting a criminal war, a war without objectives or goals, just for the sake of destruction," Al Shaiyyab added.

"Arab nations should understand that all Arabs are targeted and not only Iraq, so our opposition must be tangible," Al Shaiyyab strongly believes that a unified Arab opposition would bolster the position of Russia, China and some European countries to pressure for the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq.

Moreover, the US and Britain, which claimed they are protecting their allies in the region, have done just the opposite. "America and Britain are destabilizing these regimes instead of protecting them," Al



Shaiyyab continued. "What is happening now is that America is losing its friends while Iraq is winning." Al Shaiyyab continued. "Clinton should understand that this attack is another fiasco added to the bad situation he put himself into."

Politically, the academic

believes that the Iraqi regime is now stronger than ever, since influential countries like Russia and China accepted new arrangements that must lead eventually to the lifting of the embargo. "I think the Iraqis are closer than ever to the lifting of sanctions after the great sympathy they received," Al Shaiyyab concluded.

However, the justification of the strikes aimed at convincing the world of its legality did not work.

"It is amazing to listen to the justifications delivered by Clinton just before the assault took place," said Dr Labib Qamhawi, a well known political analyst.

"Nobody has the authority to justify the killings of people under the excuse of changing a regime, we can't accept the fact that one party can take the law into its own hands," Qamhawi told The Star that the military strikes were launched by only two countries outside the framework of the UN.

What is more important is the fact that "the oppressors were not able to find a credible alternative to the Iraqi regime they were dying to destroy," Qamhawi continued. "This proves that there is not a viable and credible opposition which

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'Might is right', or is it the other way round?

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

CLINTON AND Blair's declaration to end air strikes on Iraq last Saturday, relieved many Iraqis and eased tension in the Arab world.

However, what's next? Political circles inside and outside Iraq still fear that tension will arise again unless Iraq is willing to cooperate with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), which is in charge of destroying Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

The ongoing conflict between Iraq and the United States reached its climax last August, when UNSCOM's head Richard Butler accused the Iraqi government of delaying the UN inspection team. This had resulted in the beginnings of a stalemate between the two parties.

Tensions increased again in November for the same reason, when the team returned to inspect Iraq's so-called weapons of mass destruction. This was hindered by US

threats to take military action against Iraq if it doesn't cooperate.

But political analysts see a clear link between the US attacks on Iraq, which started last Wednesday, and President Bill Clinton's impeachment debate.

The attack took place one day before the US House of Representatives was due to vote on articles to impeach Clinton.

"The American and British military attacks, which lasted for 70 hours, are a clear violation of human rights," said one angry Jordanian citizen, who was watching the bombing on TV.

Another outraged Palestinian citizen cried out, "We have to extend our great thanks to the US president because he attacked Iraq before Ramadan. It seems that he respects our traditions!" he said sarcastically.

Clinton had already ended a visit to Gaza in

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Two young Egyptian girls chat as they hold colorful Ramadan lanterns or "Fanoos", in front of a shop 21 December. During the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslims refrain from food and drink from dawn to dusk. Reuters

Jordanians condemn strikes against Iraq

Star Staff Writer
BILL CLINTON and Tony Blair will face a public trial accusing them of criminal and aggressive attacks against Iraqi civilians, hospitals, and universities. The trial will take place in Amman but the time is still undecided. This trial is the brain-child of the pro-Iraq National Recruitment Committee.

The Committee plans to invite several distinguished Arab personalities to take part in this event.

Meanwhile, the public verdict against the two leaders appear to have already been decided. The public does not seem to need a trial since the evidence already exists. Shouts and placards screamed that "Bill Clinton and Tony Blair are found guilty of committing the most savage and barbarous attacks against a whole nation."

Jordanian anger was exhibited through mass protests all around the Kingdom in condemnation of the assault at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

"It's an attack on all Arab countries, our leaders should declare a pro-Iraqi stand," said a student at the University of Jordan.

Students at the University driven by their anger organized a peaceful rally. The demonstration kept growing as more students joined the rally as it moved around the campus.

"Thank you Clinton for your feelings towards the month of Ramadan, but you will pay

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Early Israeli elections to freeze peace process

By Ghassan Joha and
news agency dispatches

JUST DAYS after Israeli Knesset gave initial approval to hold elections early next year, the electoral campaign opened with a bang as several deputies came forward to compete for the Likud leadership.

A day after he agreed to early elections, Netanyahu watched his political fate come to an end while sliding into deadlock between supporters and opponents concerning further territorial concessions to Palestinians as part of the US-brokered peace process.

The opposition bill passed Monday at first reading on a roll call vote by 81-30 with four abstentions.

Members of Netanyahu's own Likud party backed the bill acknowledging that the embattled Israeli leader could no longer run a stable majority.

With internal issues consuming the national attention, Israel's two-month-old peace accord with the Palestinians is presently on hold.

The no-confidence vote capped a chaotic session of the 120-member Knesset, where Netanyahu's right-wing coalition has crumbled over the Wye land-for-security accord he signed with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat last October.

Shortly before the vote,



Netanyahu

opposition Labor party leader Ehud Barak rejected a dramatic last-ditch call by Netanyahu for a 72-hour recess to explore the chances for a national unity government. Barak said that the only way to face the matter is to have early elections.

Members of parliament also rejected an appeal by Netanyahu for cross-party backing to the five conditions he had set for the Palestinians before resuming the Wye deal.

The Israeli cabinet suspended the Wye agreement last Sunday, and affirmed that the decision made by Netanyahu earlier this month is only an attempt to save his coalition.

In reference to the conditions Netanyahu had set to resume talks with the Palestinians, the Israeli Prime Minister told parliament in a speech full of rhetoric "If the majority of members don't want to support

my policies, there is only one choice, either we change the people or the Knesset, I recommend we change the Knesset."

Conditions include a PNA renouncement to declare a state, its acceptance of Israel's terms for freeing Palestinian prisoners, halting incitement and violence, collecting illegal weapons, and accepting Israel's demand for reciprocity.

The Palestinians rejected the conditions and stated that they are complying with the accord and warned Israel not to use its elections as an excuse to ignore its commitments. "The present Israeli government is a legitimate one, therefore, it must carry out the agreements it has signed," said Ahmed Taibi, a senior advisor to President Arafat.

Palestinians doubt that the US administration would force Israel to fulfill their commitments, although they believe that this might be the only way out.

Men and women from across the ideological spectrum were scrambling for positions amid the latest upheaval in Israeli politics, triggered first by the latest peace deal with the Palestinians and now by the move to early elections. On both the right and the left, parties were splintering and politicians were seeking fresh alliances.

The early elections bill will require two further readings to become law, possibly as early

as Monday, 28 December. A date for the early elections must as well be scheduled.

Netanyahu, however, favors late April, to shy of the 4 May deadline when Palestinians reserve their right to declare an independent state. Analysts say that the elections are most likely to be held between March and May.

According to the Israeli constitution, such elections must be held within four months of the no confidence vote date. Late news rushed in saying that Netanyahu may consider a very late date, due to political differences in his Likud party.

At least four Likud leaders indicated that they will oppose or abandon Netanyahu, and other parties are expected to join the fray.

Netanyahu's former Finance Minister Dan Meridor abandoned his party and said that he will run as a candidate for prime minister under a new centrist banner.

Meridor, who enjoys a reputation among Israelis as a gentle man of integrity, said that the truth has vanished and the country must be saved from "Netanyahu's dangerous false appeals."

A vivid sign that something is up in Israeli politics is the startling popularity of the recently retired chief-of-staff Amnon Shahak. The self-

End of bombing leaves question—What next?

By Josh Friedman
BAGHDAD—The bulldozers are already cleaning up the rubble and, to the extent it was disrupted, life here is returning to what passes for normal.

But now that the four-day military pounding of Iraq is over, diplomats are wrestling with a far tougher problem—what comes next for Iraq and for the arms inspection program that is at the center of its problems with the West.

There is widespread consensus that the just completed bombing campaign was more limited, at least on the surface, than what had been expected. But among diplomats and the few Iraqis willing to speak openly, there is disagreement

over whether the bomb and rockets strengthened or weakened Saddam Hussein.

"A heavy blow was dealt to the regime," said one diplomat friendly to the United States. "This has been a real degradation of the capacity to restore the arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and also seriously weaken the possibility to use other means to stay in power—the armed forces and the security forces."

Another diplomat, from a country closer to Iraq, sees it differently. "At West Point, the attack would have been considered textbook perfect: damaged military targets, no casualties, all planes returned safely. But the aim was politi-

cal not military. He's still in power. He's got more allies such as France, China and Russia.

No one is talking about the coalition against Saddam anymore. Those who rely on American power in the gulf will have second thoughts."

There are questions whether the UN Special Commission charged with inspecting Iraq for weapons of mass destruction, and its provocative chief, Richard Butler, will be allowed back.

Without the inspections, it is unlikely that economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 thwarted invasion of Kuwait, will be lifted any time soon.

As a deeply divided UN Security Council held consultations on the Iraq crisis Tuesday, the United States warned that it was ready to use its veto to keep sanctions in force.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration offered Tuesday to allow Iraq to export more crude oil to raise money for food and medicine, but held out little prospect that Iraq can escape from other UN economic sanctions in the foreseeable future.

US Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering said in Washington that the amount of oil Iraq could export should be increased if its people were

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05.1.1999



Ramadan in Amman



For the Record

King receives cables

AMMAN. (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein received more cables of congratulations from heads of Arab states on the occasion of the advent of the holy month of Ramadan. The leaders wished His Majesty continued good health and happiness. The cables came from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, Uzbek President Islam Karimov as well as Sheikh Hamad Bin Mohammad Bin Jaber Al Thani.

Israeli election and peace process

AMMAN. (Petra)—Foreign Minister Abdel-Ilah Al Khatib Tuesday voiced hope that the Israeli decision to hold early election would not cause any delay in the Mideast peace process. "Priority for Jordan and for all peoples in the region is to see the peace process moving towards the fulfillment of the sought objectives to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement," the Foreign Minister said in a statement to Petra. "We are dealing with states that run the affairs of their respective countries," he said. "Although we are concerned with any political development in the region and its effect on the peace process, yet we are at the same time very much interested in seeing the peace process going on continuously," he added. "We hope the peace process will not become contingent with the outcome of an internal political development in any state," the Foreign Minister said.

Meeting

AMMAN. (Petra)—Chief of the Judiciary Council and Head of the Court of Cassation Taher Hikmah Tuesday received Qatari ambassador in Jordan Sheikh Fahad Bin Jassem Al Thani. The discussion focussed on means of boosting cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the field of law and judicial issues.

PM sends cable

AMMAN. (Petra)—Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh sent a cable to his Algerian counterpart Ismael Al Hamdani congratulating him on forming the new government in Algeria. Tarawneh stressed the support of the Jordanian people and government to Algeria, expressing his keenness to enhance relations and cooperation between the two countries in various fields. The Prime Minister wished Mr Al Hamdani all success in his post and the Algerian people further progress and prosperity.

Tourism

AMMAN. (Petra)—Minister of Tourism Akil Beltaji received on Monday the Australian Ambassador to Jordan Ian Russell and reviewed with him bilateral ties as well as ways of promoting them in the various fields. Discussions during the meeting also covered cooperation between the two countries in tourism and archaeological fields.

Saddam regains mass Arab support after bilateral aggression

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goes to show that the Iraqi regime is supported by the majority of the Iraqi people," Qamhawi said. However, he believes that determining who governs Iraq is an internal Iraqi issue. Nobody gave the Americans the right to choose for Iraqis the kind of regime which should govern them. Once again this criminal attack on Iraq consolidates the old belief that the enemy of the Arab people is the US, he stated. On the other hand the strikes only succeeded in creating new waves of anti-Americanism which was clearly exhibited in demonstrations that took place in the Arab world and around the globe. "I think the Iraqi leadership is closer than before to its people, and any attempt to change the regime will not only be

rejected by the regime but also by the people, which proves that Saddam wins," Qamhawi added. The latest strikes on Iraq have drawn a new image of the Arab world concerning the existing Arab regimes. "Demonstrators described their regimes as weak, defeated and failed to meet their aspirations," Qamhawi said. The official stance was different from the massively popular position, it is argued. "The official stance exhibited marginal and insignificant statements of support which came too little and too late," Qamhawi concluded. Other experts suggest that the aggression achieved nothing since it was a random fight. "The plan was to destroy the military infrastructures and to create internal chaos that would topple the regime," said Mash-

hour Hadeeth, a retired Lieutenant General. More than that, "the strikes inflamed Arab support which erupted into popular demonstrations throughout the Arab world to pressure their leaders," Hadeeth, a military analyst told The Star. "What Kuwait sought to see is a destroyed Iraq, but this illusion is now dropped for good." Politically, the strikes strengthened the Iraqi regime and made Saddam Hussein a national hero. "The only positive thing from the attack is the fact that it has shown the failure of UNSCOM and that it wouldn't be going back. It has also shown that international action is needed to stop the United States from acting alone," Hadeeth concluded.

Jordanians in uproar against strikes on Iraq

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dearly," screamed one banners raised by students. "We refuse to be the weak link in a chain which the superpowers play with whenever they wish," one of the students told The Star. A large number of female students holding the Holy Koran joined the rally stamping their feet on the ground in an expression of anger. The 2,000 student protest ended at the main gate of the university where security forces took their places to prevent the protest from spilling over outside the campus. Emotions of hostility were high throughout the rally reaching a crescendo when students tore the American and British flags into pieces, and called on the government to dismiss the ambassadors of the two countries. Another public event in support of Iraq was organized by the Muslim Brotherhood. The speeches focussed on the aggressive attack on an Arab country. "Washington and London are exporting death and destruction to Baghdad in

total violation of all international charters," said Hamzeh Mansour, member of the Islamic Action Front in his address to a crowd who gathered at the mosque of the University of Jordan. Speakers emphasized that the only people to lose in this conflict is the American and British whose leaders are trying to export their internal problems by military attacks on other countries. But there were more protests in several Jordanian cities, men, women and children took to the streets in solidarity with their Arab neighbor. Jordanians from all sectors called on world leaders to work together to end the strikes against Iraq. And professional associations, universities, schools, businessmen all gathered to show solidarity with Iraq. Moreover, the Parliament, in an extraordinary session held especially to discuss the US attacks against Iraq, echoed the voice of Jordanians by voting to lift the eight-year UN sanctions. The unanimous decision, which is not binding on the government, is still a courageous step by Parliament for it means that it will now continue to pressure the government to adopt a similar stance, however the decision could also be an example for all Arab countries to follow.

The Lower House sent a message to the Arab Parliamentary Union's Council urging them to hold an emergency conference to discuss the strikes against Iraq. In the meantime, popular sectors called on Jordanians to support the Iraqi people through financial aid and collections. In an unprecedented step, the Council of the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) decided to boycott all medical products produced in both the United States and Britain. Observers argue, however, that the official response has been lukewarm as it lagged behind popular sectors. But the government allowed demonstrations to take place following Friday prayers at the Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman where thousands of people marched in support of Iraq. The demonstration was peaceful.

Queuing for home

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jammers. Frequently they let in anybody who manages a toe hold on the first step of the bus. Everybody wants to go home, nobody wants to wait. On certain bus routes like Zaqra and Jerash, the situation becomes incredulous. It is open day, a zoo. Commuters of all ages not only jump the semblance of queues, but some even get in the buses by squeezing themselves through the windows. At these routes, its no point using the bus doors, for they are no use. It is the women who have trouble in pushing and shoving. They spend literally hours trying to get a bus step during these trying afternoons.

Early Israeli elections freezes ME peace process

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confident Shahak, is still in uniform and thus barred from making political statements. But Israeli television said that he will complete his resignation from the army and announce his political plans by this weekend. The 54-year-old reserve general has clashed in the past with Netanyahu on security issues and is seen as a pragmatist on the peace process. An earlier poll in Israeli newspapers confirmed that Shahak will be Netanyahu's toughest opponent in a two-way race. The survey, made by an Israeli polling institute, found voters preferring the general by 50 percent to 35 over Netanyahu. Barak, another former military general, led Netanyahu by nine points. Besides Meridor and Shahak who could be strong opponents to Netanyahu, the campaign is expected to be turbulent and unpredictable. Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, West Jerusalem's Mayor Ehud Olmert and Communications Minister Limor Livnat have been repeatedly reported as planning to oppose Netanyahu from within the Likud and could support a new centrist party.

'Might is right', or is it the other way round?

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Wednesday, to attend the Palestine National Authority's vote on abolishing articles in the National Charter about the destruction of Israel. After failing to convince Israel to stick to its commitments to the Wye accord, Clinton fled back to Washington where he immediately ordered his military officials to attack Iraq. The 70-hour air raids, which used cruise and Tomahawk missiles, left an estimated 73 Iraqis dead and thousands of casualties, most of whom were civilians. This is besides the damage they caused to the civil and military infrastructure. "It is nothing but a barbaric aggression on the Iraqi people, who are known for their patriotism. I hope that they could clone people like Saddam," said a female patriot. Ironically enough, the two

parties—the US and Britain—claim victory over each other. America and Britain declared that they have accomplished their mission by destroying Saddam's military infrastructure which will take him years to rebuild. Analysts say that the number of missiles which hit Iraq during operation "Desert Fox" is twice the number of missiles launched in "Desert Storm" in 1990. "Call it 'fox' or 'storm', it doesn't matter, Iraqis proved to be courageous enough to face such vicious and unfair attacks," a shopkeeper explained. During the Gulf War, some Gulf countries along with Egypt and Syria, condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and encouraged the United States and Britain to evict Iraqi forces. Nevertheless, in the recent bombing, some Arab countries declared that they won't allow American aircraft to use their

territory to launch attacks against Iraq. In Syria and Egypt, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets where they burnt American and British flags, and called on the international community to stop the attacks on Iraq. In Palestine, the flags which were raised less than two days before to welcome Clinton, were torn and burnt by angry demonstrators later on. When Clinton decorated the Christmas tree in Bethlehem, people were unaware that in the next day the Iraqi skies would be violated by deadly missiles," said a demonstrator, who took part in a rally at the University of Jordan. While most Arab countries kept neutral, Russia supported Iraq and insisted that Butler should resign immediately. Furthermore, Russia recalled its ambassadors in the US and Britain. But there is a mood of pessimism prevailing. It is feared that Iraq remains at the mercy of the United States and Britain. The question now is whether the strikes will resume after Ramadan.

End of bombing leaves question

Continued from page 1

suffering for lack of food. But that was the only concession on offer. Pickering said the United States would be prepared to review the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein gives guaranteed cooperation to UN weapons inspectors. If not the sanctions will remain in place and the United States will use force as needed to block weapons development, he said. Given the administration conviction that Saddam will never give the inspection force known as UNSCOM the unfettered access that the United States and Britain demand. Pickering's statement amounted to a declaration that Russia, France and other advocates of modifying the inspection system and the economic sanctions will confront strong US and British opposition. The 'oil for food' program,

he said "would be the one area where the United States certified that additional humanitarian funds were needed to feed Iraq's population. Currently, Iraq is permitted to sell \$ 5.2 billion worth of oil every six months to purchase food and medicine. Administration officials described Pickering's remarks as part of an effort to assuage anger in the Security Council about the four days of US and British air strikes. The strategy of doing something for the regular people, diplomats here say, comes from the United States' belief that starving people are less likely to speak out against Hussein because they are too busy simply trying to survive. Among diplomats here, there is a belief that the United States and Britain deliberately avoided bombing some of the targets hit in 1991 such as bridges, water systems, electricity grids and oil pumping and shipping facilities, all of which are tied to the standard

of living of the ordinary Iraqi. "If you hit the oil infrastructure, then the 'oil for food' program collapses and the people start starving again," said one diplomat. He argues that ordinary Iraqis were gratified to see the precision in which the United States and Britain destroyed targets associated with Hussein's military and police power while avoiding civilian-related targets.

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Online
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Oscars distributed by SUCCESS

ON TUESDAY, 15 December, the first annual Oscars reception by SUCCESS for Training and Human Resources Development, took place at the Hard Rock Cafe in Amman, under the patronage of Minister of Information Nasser Joudeh, and the cooperative presence of

She later gave Mr Joudeh the 'Oscar of Honor' for his effective and continuous support. The annual Oscar awards were as follows: Oscar of best company in year 1998, awarded to ARAMEX.

Mr Ambassador of the year was awarded to Mr Mohammed S. Al Turk. Ms Ambassador of the year to Ms Lara Dallal. Oscar of the best speaker of the year was given to Mr Fadi Khoury. And Oscar for best follow-up was given to Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan. A very special bow was delivered to Ra'ed Bilbeisi, general manager of the Amman branch-World Trade Center, for his outstanding efforts and high level of professionalism.

Among a number of more than 100-people, general managers and senior executives were also present, along with El Zay, Dunes Club, Housing Bank, Amin Kawa & sons, T. Gargour & Fils, and many more. The reception included a quiz night and a very innovative and active atmosphere.



Christmas Lunch

We've decked the hall with boughs of holly, come join us and be jolly. Santa Claus for all the children, for you cuisine in all its glory. Celebrate with us this year and we can guarantee lots of cheer. Arrive at One for all the fun and be sure to tell just anyone. December 25, 1998. Philadelphia Hall - 1pm JD20++ and children JD10++

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JORDAN

WEEK



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views

Social Security

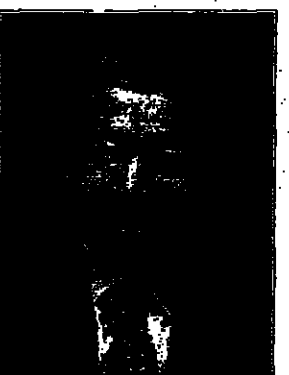
Prime Minister Dr. Fayez Al Tarawneh headed last week at the Planning Ministry, the second meeting of the Ministerial Committee for the Strategy to Combat Poverty and Unemployment—the so-called Social Security Package (SSP). In this meeting Dr. Al Tarawneh assured that his government is now ready to carry out the SSP programs after the necessary finance had been made available. He called on the media to make people—especially the less fortunate—aware of the programs. However, the Prime Minister emphasized that the SSP programs are not designed to over-take or over-lap the roles of other charitable institutions like the Al Zakat Fund and the Queen Alia Fund. Planning Minister Dr. Nabeel Amari said the first stage of the Package which will last for the three coming years include four points: To widen social security, create job opportunities, increase investment projects and generally to provide a suitable economic environment and development financial infrastructure.



Dr. Tarawneh

No more refugees

With the latest strike on Iraq last week, it was feared that many Iraqis would cross the Kuwaiti border. However, this didn't happen due to a number of factors, among which has been the closure of the border by Jordan. Interior Minister Nayef Al Qadhi has lately said that there are no more Iraqi refugees on the joint Iraqi-Jordanian borders. He said the situation has returned to normal, the border is now open, and people can come and go as they like. This also applies to the transportation of goods.



Nayef Al Qadhi

Immunity

The Legal Committee of the Lower House postponed its decision over the issue of lifting immunity on deputy Ahmed Odeh Al-Abbadi. Rapporteur of the committee Mahmoud Kharabshah told reporters that the committee can't make a decision on the issue since it has no judicial rights to do so. However, Kharabshah added that the committee will still study the issue later on. He didn't elaborate. The issue of lifting immunity is still raising a constitutional question. It is thought that lifting immunity can't take place while Parliament is in session. Al-Abbadi is being accused of sexual misconduct by the courts.

Viagra in Jordan



The famous blue tablet, Viagra, will be available in the Kingdom as soon as next month according to sources at the Ministry of Health. The Medical Committee at the Ministry affirmed in its report that the tablets are safe. When it is introduced to the market the set-drive tablet will only cost you as little as JD 9. However, it would be cheaper to buy a bottle that would only cost you 36 dinars. Furthermore, these prices are official and have been proved by the Tariff Committee in the Ministry of Health.

Intellectual property rights gets a boost in Jordan

THE JORDANIAN Society for the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights held its first official meeting in its headquarters, in Amman, last week in the presence of delegates from the Government of Amman and the Directorate of Public Security.

The Society is the first of its kind in Jordan that is concerned with intellectual property rights in Jordan and the region. It has been formed to work in the name of those who are willing to express some of the problems they are facing due to infringements of intellectual property rights, seeking to provide possible solutions, and educate the population about IPR, who they are and why they should be protected.

It also aims at providing specialized research and legal consultations on the subject, and assist the legislators in regulating IPR, that would ensure better respect to such rights. The Foundation Board of the Society consists of a number of leading Jordanian figures in different fields of Intellectual Property Rights.



Al-Talhouini

In Jordan, on occasion of the first meeting, elections for the Administrative Council took place and results were as follows: Dr. Bassam Al Talhouini, President, Murad Bushnaq Administrative Vice President, Mohammed Tagtagah, Secretary, Basil Abdo, Treasurer, and Kifah Fakhouri, Member of Council. Seven more members joined the Foundation Board, including Adnan Awamleh, Karim Kawar, Hussein D'eibes, Ramzi Zeine, Youssef Taher, Hussein Sissan and Samir Seiqali.



His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, the Regent, talks with Prime Minister Fayez Al Tarawneh during their visit to Amman on the eastern border with Iraq, Sunday. Prince Hassan assured officials he met of the stable situation in the area in the aftermath of the US and British air strikes over Iraq last week. The Regent also visited the Al Reishah Power Station, and met with employees and workers in the station. The Prince shared with them the Ifar meal.

In Jordan, sympathy is with Saddam

By Matthew McAllester

AMMAN—It was an orderly meeting, with the heads of some of Jordan's most prominent trade unions delivering measured speeches from a tatty brown podium at the front of the room. Orderly, until one man in the front row could not keep his anger in any longer.

He jumped up on his chair and turned to face the crowd. "We are with Iraq," he called out in a rhythmic Arabic chant to the 400 officials of the Professional Association who had gathered in the conference hall to condemn the US and British air strikes on Iraq. "And we are with Saddam Hussein."

Without hesitation, the majority in the crowd of doctors, dentists, lawyers, professors and engineers leapt to their feet and repeated the chant with the kind of fury that Jordanians all over the capital are feeling about the attacks on their Arab neighbor.

"Arab unity, Arab unity," came the cry from another man at the back of the packed hall as the already damning speeches of the well-dressed

union chairmen gave way to the rank-and-file outrage.

In interviews with Jordanians in the capital Saturday, not a single person expressed support for the air strikes, attacks that President Clinton said in an address to the Arab people Saturday are partially intended to protect neighboring countries such as Jordan from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Jordanians were not buying Clinton's argument. None said he had ever felt threatened by Iraq. Rather, some of the storekeepers, marketing managers and doctors of this close Arab ally of the United States said Clinton was their enemy. And, many said, the US-led strikes will only improve Hussein's popularity in the Arab world.

The reaction of the Jordanian people has been stronger than the official response to the attacks. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, expressed "sadness and pain" over the situation Jordan is in the conflicted position of having supported Saddam Hussein during the last Gulf War.

Joining the chorus of popular condemnation Saturday were some of the many Iraqis living in Amman.

"Is America trying to rewrite the story of Hitler?" asked Abu Mirana, 35, an Iraqi who manages an outdoor restaurant in downtown Amman and was enjoying a glass of tea just after sundown. "Hitler tried to rule the world. Is Clinton trying to do the same?"

Seven other Iraqis interviewed also supported their leader.

While Hussein's popularity appears high in Amman, most Jordanians, from professionals to blue-collar workers, are more focused on their hostility toward the United States and Britain. Many said the two countries are either arrogant imperialists trying to impose their will on the demonized

Arab world or, in a kinder interpretation, blundering fools who cannot understand that the Arab people have their own ways of dealing with their own internal issues.

"American people are very polite and pleasant but they are detached from the reality of having to fight a war," said a woman who called herself Mona and who lived in the United States for 18 years. "They don't know how complex it is here. Everything is so perfect there. So they insulate themselves in their own lifestyles. If this war justifies maintaining a comfortable lifestyle then they can be sold on it."

Press Cocktail

Edited by Buthai Al-Hadid

Iraq: the military strike

Mazen Al Saket in *Ad Dustour* discusses the implications of the latest American/British strike against Iraq. He says it has created obvious changes in the nature of international relations. For the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia is seriously trying to challenge the notion of a one superpower in the international system, and it is as if it was trying to say that a bipolar world dominated by one country just will not do. This was clearly expressed by its stands and views expressed in the UN Security Council. China also joined the criticism of American and British actions in the strongest possible way.

Members of the Russian Duma voted unanimously to condemn operation Desert Fox, and the government went as far as to call back its ambassadors from Washington and London. The Russian Parliament even proposed to lift the sanctions which were imposed on Iraq and resume its economic relations with Baghdad.

Al Saket adds that these developments should not be taken lightly, for they signify the dimension of the international relations and the nature of the new world order. It also discusses American efforts in spreading their hegemony over the rest of the world.

As a result, the Kremlin is reconsidering its military strategy, and it announced its intentions to delay the signing of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Despite the weakness of the Russian economy and its dependence on loans from the World Bank and the US, this attack changed the nature of strategic thinking, where even China will find greater support in playing a major role in the international equation. Al Saket adds that we hope this international phenomenon will continue to spread, because it could prove to be one of the basic solutions that will put a stop to the hegemony of one power and the new world order.

...And Arab televisions...

Fakri Qawar in *Al Rai* on the other hand focuses on how Arab televisions dealt with the military strikes. He points out that even Arab satellite stations reflected the official attitudes towards the strike. For a while he says, the viewer got the impression that the TV stations talked about the strike as if it was happening in Mozambique, the Falklands or Nepal.

Our illustrious TV stations, he interprets, continued with the usual run of the mill programs and presented in their exact time slots. Singers continued to sing, and phone-in programs were presented so that audiences can talk to their favorite stars and singers.

He points out that no one seemed to have any interest in what's happening in Iraq, we carried on as if everything was honky dory in that part of our world. We had no interest in the dropping of bombs or rockets which killed thousands of Iraqi women and children, he adds.

Our stations chose to ignore the barbaric attack on Iraq reflects the shameful and hesitant stand which prevailed in the Arab world during the attack, Qawar maintains.

The anger, that was made by the American/British attack, reached Russia, Athens and many other foreign capitals. Indeed many demonstrations and marches took place in these capitals, to condemn the actions of the American president, who chose to kill millions of defenseless Iraqis in order to cover up his internal problems. It should not also escape our attention that the news of the attack were brought to us live through foreign stations, while Arab stations would not even think of jeopardizing the safety of news team just to cover an attack on an Arab country!

Female broadcasters, who only care about their looks and hairstyles should be taught about their heritage and culture, instead of the benefits of make up. Qawar points out they should be taught about the notion of loyalty to the Arab cause, and should have some feeling of belonging to that cause.

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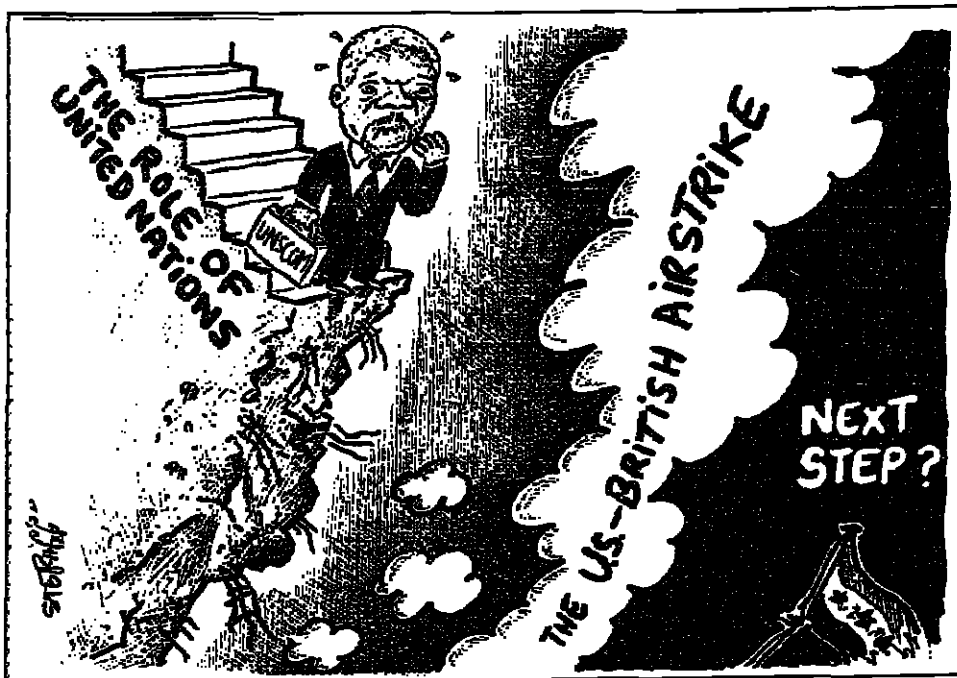
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Our Say...

Casualties of Desert Fox

OPERATION DESERT FOX has uncovered the ugly face of a neo-colonial onslaught against Arabs and Muslims. By any standard, the US-British aggression on Iraq is a violation of international law and the UN Charter. Both countries have sidestepped the Security Council mandate and its resolutions, and acted as rogue states under the guise of ridding the world of the Iraqi menace. But in addition to the innocent Iraqi victims who have fallen, the operation's other casualties are still being counted. UNSCOM, the body responsible for monitoring Iraq's destruction of its weapons of mass destruction, has lost its mandate in Iraq as a result of the operation. It is disgusting to see US and British officials calling on Iraq to readmit UN inspectors right after a military operation that was triggered by UNSCOM's chief and whose aim was to "degrade" Iraq's military capabilities. Shocked by Arab and international condemnation of their barbaric attack, Washington and London are now scurrying to cast legitimacy on their illegal act. US officials believe they can soothe the Iraqis by promising to expand the oil-for-food program, days after they used the most advanced war technology available against defenseless Iraq.

Another victim of Operation Desert Fox is the eight-year-old sanctions regime. The strike broke international consensus on the Iraqi issue. The time has come to lift the sanctions and free the Iraqi people from its brutal yoke. If the United States and Britain act as if they are above the law, then why should the rest of the world allow such a farce to continue? In fact both countries should be made accountable for their crimes against the Iraqi people. But the most prominent casualty of the latest aggression is the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations bodies. For four days and nights, the Security Council watched helplessly and shamelessly as Washington and London ruthlessly bombed a UN member.

Even after they stopped their aggression both capitals continue to make threats against Iraq and its people. The United States had bombed Sudan and Afghanistan a few months ago and got away with it. Today it is launching a war to degrade Iraq as a country and the Security Council is unable to intercede. Such arrogant actions are threatening world security and international relations. For eight years, Iraq has been subjected to an unprecedented siege and disarmament program.

Today the country is divided, its GNP is a handful of dollars, and its literacy, health, sanitation, agricultural production and other indicators are way below accepted UN standards. Still the US and Britain insist that Iraq still poses a threat. The Arabs, on the other hand, insist that Iraq is the real threat with its covert nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs. Israel stands in defiance of UN resolutions and international laws and yet Iraq is singled out for punishment. Operation Desert Fox has shown that the Arab world is facing a ferocious colonial onslaught. Calls for holding an Arab summit must be heeded immediately because this is what the Arab people want. The US-British campaign against Iraq must be condemned and the sanctions must be lifted in order to send a strong message to the world that enough is enough! ■

Food for thought

In search of a scapegoat

WHAT COULD be more punishable for a whole nation—who have lived under seven long years of UN sanctions—than to endure more threats to its existence? Clearly the Americans and British do have a bone to pick with a country that has opened its doors and files to UN inspectors. They want their pound of flesh. It is not enough that the country is being bled to death.

Iraqis were hoping the sanctions would be lifted soon after the last crisis with the UNSCOM inspectors, but instead bombs and missiles were dropped indiscriminately on Iraq, killing many civilians in a deadly four-day air strike.

No sooner had he completed a warm visit to Gaza showing support to the Palestinians, President Clinton ordered his rocket launchers east. Sadly, the angel of peace had quickly changed colors becoming the angel of death and destruction.

With no forewarning, or going to the UN Security Council as a point of reference, both the US and UK launched their operation Desert Fox to destroy what they believed as Saddam Hussein's menacing threat to their neighbors and world security.

What America and Britain wanted to show to the world in this timely attack however, is their unchallenged and supreme power status, and in proving that their long arm can strike any part in the world and target any community on earth. The operations came as a shock to other permanent members of the UN Security Council. Russia, China and France, have not even been consulted. The United States has long recognized that these

powers would have been cautious about sanctioning force. These countries knew the truth and wanted the embargo lifted, but America and Britain lent a deaf ear. By taking such military action, the US has proclaimed itself once again a world policeman, a judge and a jury on a country that has long been devastated. Richard Butler has incited and created several crises with Iraqis to keep the door open for the Americans to flex their muscles. Butler has no more credibility for he engineered the crisis. Since 1991 until the recent attack, the inspectors refused to accomplish their task, and this is why the sanctions are still imposed and further attacks could still be on the way.

It has been shown time and again that US policy in the region is double-faced. Their desire is to keep Israel as the sole superpower in the region. Israel's implementation of the UN resolutions is not an issue. Weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological and nuclear are acquired by them, thousands of millions of dollars are pumped every year by the US for security purposes and military supremacy against its neighbors.

But US policy and its allies have been exposed and can't be trusted anymore. This vendetta was designated and engineered against helpless Arab nations. The missile which fell on Iran by mistake is only a warning, this game leads to nowhere but to pain, tears and affliction...the future is still as obscure ever. ■

Ehsan Nimri

Letter from the Levant

Foxes straying in the desert: America's legacy of hate

By Osama El-Sherif

WE SAW two faces of President Clinton in as many days. We saw him light a candle of peace in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem amid grateful Palestinians. Then, we saw him stone faced, sitting in his Oval Office addressing the American people as he defended his decision to bomb Iraq.

President Clinton made another video-taped address to the Arab and Muslim people in which he explained why it was necessary to bomb Iraq at this time and in which he again outlined that the US has no quarrel with the Iraqi people or the Muslim world.

The mere idea that the presidential video message would make Arabs and Muslims accept the thrashing of Iraq is insulting. US officials, on the eve of "Operation Desert Fox", made it clear that they were sensitive to the fact that the holy month of Ramadan was only days away and that the president was keen on wrapping up the assault before the onset of the fasting season.

The United States never ceases to surprise us as it sows insults and injuries, and reaps a harvest of hate and acrimony.

What was Operation Desert Fox all about? How was it different from previous military campaigns against Iraq, like Desert Storm and Desert Shield? Who comes up with these "romantic" Hollywoodish ideas anyway? And what about the timing of the latest attack? How is it related to Monica's and the impeachment of President Clinton? Why is it that the British seem to be instigating and leading the conspiracy against Iraq?

These are some of the many questions that Arab columnists, thinkers, politicians as well as the man in the street were asking themselves as they watched on live TV for four successive nights smart but deadly bombs falling on Baghdad.

Scenes of the bombardment were almost unreal. Some Western journalists made outrageous comparisons between Bag-

dad's night sky during the Gulf War and in the last few days, the case being that there was more action, and more thrill in 1991.

The declared goals of the campaign were gradually shifted as the bombing continued. First, it was to degrade Saddam's capabilities to produce weapons of mass destruction. So the obvious targets, one would conclude, were suspected chemical and biological manufacturing facilities. But if US and British forces bombed such sites, what about lethal fall-out? Wouldn't millions of innocent Iraqis die as a result of exposure to deadly chemical and biological agents? No answer was given. And then the military targets began to diversify. Top brass began bragging about hitting security and police buildings, army bunkers, telecommunication and TV transmission towers, airfields, radar facilities, oil refineries, conventional armaments...etc. It became a war to reduce Iraq to ruins.

The world saw fallen civilian victims, damaged hospitals, colleges and residential buildings turned to rubble. What was going on? The sly fox had changed objectives. He was not after WMD—abbreviation used by US officials to refer to weapons of mass destruction—the crafty fox was after something else: to destabilize Saddam's regime and cripple Iraq even further.

Suddenly, just as it started, the Anglo-Saxon aggression came to a halt, not because of Ramadan, since Baghdad and other Iraqi cities sustained heavy bombing on the first day of the fasting month.

Four days and over 500 Cruise missiles later, the "objective" was achieved. But four days were enough to shake and loosen America's foreign policy assets in the Middle East for a long time to come. Four days that restored to Saddam Hussein much of his lost legitimacy as leader of Iraq. Four days that energized and inflamed anti-American sentiments in the region, just when they were showing signs of abating.



Osama El-Sherif

However, those four days and nights had unleashed so much hate for America and Britain among the Arabs, that we found ourselves back in the early days of the Gulf War. So much hate that US officials actually felt it back in Washington DC.

Yankeeophobia had spread like fire in Cairo, Amman, Gaza, Damascus and even spilled into some European capitals. Hate and defiance had replaced fear in the sense that Baghdad slept every night with its lights on, like it did on normal nights, indifferent to falling American and British bombs.

Afterwards, travel warnings, bans, the closure of US embassies—around 40 missions in Africa alone—and the tightened security. Why?

You pass by the US embassy compound in Amman, already designed and built as a fortress, and you see signs of terror. Fresh cement barriers encircling the compound, heavily armed paramilitary police besieging the complex, nervous diplomats canceling Christmas get-togethers and burrowing in their artificially-lit offices with shuttered windows.

Nevertheless, life for Iraqis and indeed for all those whose lives have been poisoned by America through sanctions, bombs and deprivation goes on. Inside there is anger, bottled and building up. It is the kind of

anger and hate that gives birth to the likes of Ben Laden and thousands like him who give up their lives to hurt America and avenge its crimes.

There is a unique understanding across the Arab world of what Desert Fox was all about? It is seen as the embodiment of evil: aimed at every Iraqi, every Arab and every Muslim. That's what the newspaper columnists are saying, what the imams are shouting from their pulpits and what fathers and mothers are telling their children. The children who stay up at night to watch Baghdad, the city that keeps popping up in their history, geography, Arabic and religion books, burn by American bombs.

America's legacy is tons of hate injected into young Arab generations for everything it stands for. The fox has acted foolishly and may have strayed in the desert, Iraq, even at its bleakest hour, seems invincible while President Clinton awaits trial for perjury and obstruction of justice by the US Senate just like a common criminal.

On the other hand, one wonders why America hates us so much; why Americans feel nothing for an Arab country that has bled for eight long years, that suffered more than enough under brutal sanctions. How could hate filter down to encompass us all? How does it become a natural reflex, a built-in mechanism on both sides?

Are we wrong to associate Clinton's tantrums with Monica? Are we naive not to associate the bombings with the impeachment proceedings? Are we to draw is a line between their weapons of mass destruction and ours? And then, what? What comes after Desert Fox? Are there more romantic names for deadly adventures?

Desert Fox will cast its ugly shadow on "relations" with the United States for a long time to come. Fear has been replaced with hate, and hate is a blind anti-colonial emotion that you see in the eyes of people in Cairo and Amman, Sanaa and Muscat, Damascus and Palestine. ■

Deadly cost of a degrading act

By Robert Fisk

WE ARE now in the endgame, the final bankruptcy of Western policy towards Iraq, the very last throw of the dice. We fire 200 cruise missiles into Iraq and what do we expect? Is a chastened Saddam Hussein going to emerge from his bunker to explain to us how sorry he is? Will he tell us how much he wants those nice UN inspectors to return to Baghdad to find his "weapons of mass destruction"? Is that what we think? Is that what the Anglo-American bombardment is all about? And if so, what happens afterwards? What happens when the missile attacks end—just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, because, of course, we really are very sensitive about Iraqi religious feelings—and Saddam Hussein tells us that the UN inspectors will never be allowed to return?

As the cruise missiles were launched, President Clinton announced that Saddam had "disarmed the UN inspectors," and Tony Blair—agonising about the lives of the "British forces" involved (all 14 pilots)—told us that "we act because we must." In so infantile a manner did we go to war on Wednesday night. No policies. No perspective. Not the slightest hint as to what happens after the bombardment ends. With no UN inspectors back in Iraq, what are we going to do? Declare eternal war against Iraq?

We are "punishing" Saddam—or so Mr Blair would have us believe. And all the old clichés are being muddled out. In 1985, just before he bombed them, Ronald Reagan told the Libyans that the United States had "no quarrel with the Libyan people." In 1991, just before he bombed them, George Bush told the Iraqis that he had "no quarrel with the Iraqi people." And now we have Tony Blair—as he bombs them—telling Iraqis that, yes, he has "no quarrel with the Iraqi people."

Is there a computer that churns out this stuff? Is there a cliché department at Downing Street which also provides Robin Cook with the tired phrase of the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, about how Saddam used gas "against his own people?"

For little did we care when he did use that gas against the Kurds of Halabja—because, at the time, those Kurds were allied to Iran and we, the West, were supporting Saddam's invasion of Iran.

The lack of any sane long-term policy towards Iraq is the giveaway. Our patience—according to Clinton and Blair—is exhausted. Saddam cannot be trusted to keep his word (they've just realised). And so Saddam's ability to "threaten his neighbors"—neighbors who don't in fact want us to bomb Iraq—has to be "degraded." That word "degraded" is a military term, first used by General

Schwarzkopf and his boys in the 1991 Gulf war, and it is now part of the vocabulary of the weak.

Saddam's weapons of mass destruction have to be "degraded." Our own dear Mr Cook was at it again, informing us of the need to "degrade" Saddam's military capability.

How? The UN weapons inspectors—led for most of the time by Scott Ritter (the man who has admitted he kept flying to Israel to liaise with Israeli military intelligence), could not find out where Saddam's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons were hidden. They had been harassed by Iraq's intelligence thugs, and prevented from doing their work. Now we are bombing the weapons facilities which the inspectors could not find. Or are we? For there is a very serious question that is not being asked: if the inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we know where to fire the cruise missiles?

And all the while, we continue to impose genocidal sanctions on Iraq, sanctions that are killing innocent Iraqis and—by the admission of Mr Cook and Mr Albright—not harming Saddam at all. Mrs Albright rages at Saddam's ability to go on building palaces, and Mr Cook is obsessed with a report of the regime's purchase of liposuction equipment which, if true, merely proves that sanctions are a total failure.

Mr Cook prattles on about how Iraq can sell more than \$10 billion (\$6 billion) of oil a year to pay for food, medicine and other humanitarian goods. But since more than 30 percent of these oil revenues are diverted to the UN compensation fund and UN expenses in Iraq, his statement is totally untrue.

Dennis Halliday, the man who ran the UN oil-for-food programme in Baghdad, until he realized that thousands of Iraqi children were dying every month because of sanctions, resigned his post with the declaration that "we are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is illegal and immoral." So either Mr Halliday is a pathological liar—which I do not believe—or Mr Cook has a serious problem with the truth—which I do believe.

Now we are bombing the people who are suffering under our sanctions. Not to mention the small matter of the explosion of child cancer in southern Iraq, most probably as a result of the Allied use of depleted uranium shells during the 1991 war. Gulf war veterans may be afflicted with the same sickness, although the British Government refuses to contemplate the possibility. And what, in this latest strike, are some of our warheads made of? Depleted uranium, of course?

Maybe there really is a plan afoot for a coup d'état, though hopefully more ambitious than our call to the Iraqi people to

rise up against their dictator in 1991, when they were abandoned by the Allies they thought would speed to their rescue. Mr Clinton says he wants a democracy in Iraq—as fanciful a suggestion as any made recently. He is demanding an Iraqi government that "represents its people" and "respects" its citizens. Not a single Arab regime—especially not Washington's friends in Saudi Arabia—offers such luxuries to its people. We are supposed to believe, it seems, that Washington and London are terribly keen to favour the Iraqi people with a fully fledged democracy. In reality, what we want in Iraq is another bullying dictator—but one who will do as he is told, invade the countries we wish to see invaded (Iran), and respect the integrity of those countries we do not wish to see invaded (Kuwait).

Yet no questions are being asked, no lies uncovered. Ritter, the Marine Corps inspector who worked with Israeli intelligence, claimed that Richard Butler—the man whose report triggered this week's new war—was aware of his visits to Israel. Is that true? Has anyone asked Mr Butler? He may well have avoided such contacts—but it would be nice to have an answer.

So what to do with Saddam? Well, first, we could abandon the wicked sanctions regime against Iraq. We have taken enough innocent lives. We have killed enough children. Then we could back the real supporters of democracy in Iraq—not the ghouls and spooks who make up the so-called Iraqi National Congress, but the genuine dissidents who gathered in Beirut in 1991 to demand freedom for their country, but were swiftly ignored by the Americans once it became clear that they didn't want a pro-Western strongman to lead them. And we could stop believing in Washington Vice-President Al Gore told Americans that it was a time for "national resolve and unity."

You might have thought that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor, or that General MacArthur had just abandoned Bataan. When President Clinton faced the worst of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, he bombed Afghanistan and Sudan. Faced with impeachment, he now bombs Iraq. How far can a coincidence go?

This week, two Christian armies—America's and Britain's—went to war with a Muslim nation, Iraq. With no goals, but with an army of platitudes, they have abandoned the UN's weapons control system, closed the door on arms inspections, and opened the door to an unlimited military offensive against Iraq. And nobody has asked the obvious question: what happens next? ■

The Independent

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Janbek

Desert and Fox Café

THIS CAFÉ which has become fashionable lately, is famous for its juke-box. While trying to find my way through a customer approached the juke-box and selected the "Iraqi neighbors feel much safe", a golden oldie that brought many to their feet.

However, the expression on the faces of the crowd was that of bemusement and even of concern. The song did not radiate joy—no one declared that it invoked bitter memories. Next, somebody else approached the machine and pressed another request, this time, to everybody's surprise the single "bombardment in Ramadan" came up.

This relatively old-new tune was not suitable for dancing despite the fact that some were moving aimlessly without paying any attention to the music. The rest seemed to be engaged in a fervent conversation not understanding the relationship between bombardment and Ramadan, at which point one felt the urge to tell them to lighten up, it was only a tune after all. But the discussion on some tables was so intense that one assumed a positive neutrality over the issue, and wondered how western market research has managed to discover our Islamic extra piety in Ramadan through the extensive monitoring of our consumer habits in this holy month.

Before one started day-dreaming about the relationship of market research to religious piety someone must have pushed the button which was not at first recognizable. Customers at the neighboring table were debating the merits of the song's lyrics, deploring the case that it was the personal antics of the lead singer which made the song famous, and that otherwise it "wouldn't have reached the top five" of golden oldies.

Others were saying that it is the habit at this festive season to have records reaching the top if they contained some aspects of religious elements, but the majority were not concerned much and the music was just that of background value.

The café has a corner named the "curiosity shop," which is famous for selling only one product, and that is "yardsticks." As you look around, you start wondering why those are called yardsticks as they come in various sizes and lengths. There are many shoppers in this corner, there is even small yardsticks for little children accompanied by an educational kit with instructions in various languages informing the purposes and usage of the yardstick. One family was holding the hand of their child, and with a noticeable puzzlement on their face, approached the sales counter reluctantly, and asked the person who was serving, the reason for calling the stick a "yardstick," and immediately explained with embarrassment that it was their child who was asking, and that they did not wish to give the wrong impression by giving the wrong answer.

The sales person, with a passive fixed stare on the face, replied to this mundane question, which seemed to have been asked many a time, that the yardstick is a yardstick, and depends on the height and legs of the person measuring the yard. I was too embarrassed to thank them for saving me from the same treatment for I was also wondering about the label and never dared to ask anyone for the meaning of yardstick. Armed with my newly acquired enlightenment, one regained at least the facade of self-confidence, and decided that one was no better, nor worse than the rest of the customers, but considerably less wealthy than most of them.

With a spinning head, I left the café in the hope of finding different reality, suddenly it dawned on me that the recent Anglo-American bombardment has provided a precedent for the bombardment of Iraq from now on, and without any prior warning, or even any reference to the UN. ■

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Jordan Press & Publishing Co. (Ad-Dustour).
Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 5664153 Fax 5667170
P.O. Box 591 Postal Code 11118 Amman - Jordan. e-mail: Star@arabia.com
URL: http://www.star.arabia.com

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Business scene

Over 198 investment projects were established in the Kingdom during this year. According to a recent report issued by the Investment Promotion Corp., the total amount of these projects is estimated at JD 500 million, a 40 percent rise over last year. The industrial sector alone attained 150 projects this year.

Nine new specified standards were ratified in Jordan this month. The Ministry of Trade and Industry approved the new Jordanian standards for car fuels, industrial oxygen, aluminum utensils and asphalt jutes.

UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is considering a rise in its contribution to the health insurance fund. The agency currently takes five percent of the overall wages, or 60 percent of its health expenses in the fund. Employees at UNRWA urged the administration to reconsider better wages and work conditions.

Insurance companies have to separate health insurance from their policies. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, which issued a rule last week, ordered the companies to form a special policy for health insurance and obtain it separately.

The Audit Bureau saved more than two million dinars on the national treasury during this year. The Bureau made over 800 surprise examinations to public institutions and departments during the previous months, and issued more than 1800 fines of violations to them including treasuries, accountants and tax collectors.

About JD 170,000 is the net loss of The Ala' Al Deen Industries Company during the second half of this year. According to a statement by its administration, the amount is 40 percent less than the same period last year. The report also pointed out that total losses since the beginning of this year is estimated at JD 406,000 by the end of last October.

The National Company for Textiles and Plastic Industries has signed an agreement last week with the Iraqi government to export some of its products to the Iraqi markets. The deal, which came within the Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation, is estimated at \$ 677.5 thousand. Over five million bags of plastic industries are expected to be exported according to the agreement.

A Jordanian delegation from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Royal Jordanian has left to Pakistan last week. The delegation, led by the general director of the CAA, Jasser Ziad, will discuss ways to promote mutual cooperation between the two countries in the aviation and navigation sectors.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 23 December 1998		
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7880	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SEK	0.4901	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
INR	0.3667	0.3685
LEP	0.6419	0.6421

World markets rocked to the knees by latest bombing

By Ghassan Joha of The Star and news agencies

WORLD AND local economic markets were shocked as the news rushed in during the past week of the US and British air strikes on Iraq. There was also mixed reactions from leading European and Asian stock markets.

The US-led strikes also affected the values of world currencies as investors headed for the safe haven of the dollar. Stock markets registered a marked increase at the beginning of the week, shrugging off the three-day attacks, and the impeachment against the US President Bill Clinton.

Clinton called off the attacks late Saturday night, 19 December, after three consecutive nights of fierce bombing which coincided with the beginning of the Holy month of Ramadan.

The bombings came as a result of Iraq's differences with the UN weapons inspectors, following mainly a report submitted by chief inspector Richard Butler accusing Iraq of failing to restore cooperation.

On the other hand, the US House of Representatives voted for impeachment setting the stage for the possible removal of President Clinton from office.

"Neither event is having much of an impact on the fundamental economic values," said Richard Hoey, a chief US economist.

Stocks rose sharply during the first day, 17 December, with Nasdaq market jumping to a new high, as the Wall Street faced a rise in the Dow Jones Industrial average adding about 81.87 points over the last weekend.

Much of the day's volume was attributed to the expirations of options on stocks as well as index futures and options. Among stocks in the news, the Nike Inc. which lost most of its earlier earnings, after reports said that it expects a 51 percent plunge in quarterly earnings due to a soft US retail market.

Turning to the Far East markets, the yen rose against the US dollar amid the US-led air strikes. According to press reports, the yen was traded at 115.19 to the US dollar.

But dealers no longer treated the greenback-dollar as a 'safe haven' currency in times of crises. Other Asian currencies and stock markets ended in a mixed state against the political crisis in the Gulf. Although, the Iraqi situation was not really seen as a major market-moving factor.

Nevertheless, the Australian dollar rate was determined in the weekend by commodity prices after losing almost half a US cent earlier.

The depreciation was due to the failure of Australia's Financial Sector Restriction Authority, at which loans seized from closed finance firms were put up for sale.

Here in Jordan, the Amman Financial Market (AFM) reacted softly to the crisis. The trade index fell slightly amid few transactions on Saturday, 19 December. Observers at the AFM witnessed a slothful dealing with only five stocks increased their prices from the previous week. Fahed Al Fanek, a well-known Jordanian economic expert, criticized the latest crisis and said that Jordan, after Iraq will be harmed from these strikes.

"The attacks on Iraq increases the disclosure of Jordan's economic background, where the Kingdom used to support Iraq's political and economic interests," Dr Al Fanek told The Star.

"Iraq is currently the sole oil supplier for Jordan, and imports over 25 percent of Jordan's exports. According to Dr Al Fanek, the latest crisis deepens Jordan's burdens.

Arab markets, moreover, were also affected to the crisis in addition to the 18-month world economic crisis they already suffered from. Beside the lowered stock exchanges, Arab economies are suffering from decreasing prices of oil.

Dealers were preparing for a meeting earlier last week of ministers of OPEC producers like Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and non-OPEC Mexico. The trio, architects of agreements earlier this year, called their counterparts to stick to the agreement that urges a cut of 3.1 million barrels per day from



Shopping around in one of the markets in Baghdad

world supplies, but failed to pull out any new moves to combat an imposing global supply surplus.

The failure pulled prices back within range of 12-year lows set just last week at \$9.60 and heaped fresh misery on oil producers already enduring the lowest yearly average price for over 20 years. The only concrete new measure to emerge was Venezuela's commitment to extend cuts by six months to the end of 1999, matching pledges from Saudi Arabia and Mexico.

But Saudi Arabia claimed to have secured a new commitment from Venezuela for a fresh attack on global oversupply.

A senior Saudi source said the three producers, who earlier this year marshalled a 3.1 million bpd producer cutback package, have no qualms about making further sacrifices.

Venezuela has previously said it could not consider fresh cuts as its new government prepares to take office in February.

The producer trio also agreed to enforce rigorous compliance with their combined cuts of 1.45 million bpd. Accusations of Venezuelan indiscipline was among the disputes that stopped OPEC reaching any agreement at an acrimonious November meeting.

Renewed co-operation could prepare the ground for potential new producer action early next year, analysts said warning that a long dispute over Iran's production level could block progress.

Saudi Arabian oil minister Ali Al Naimi admitted last

week that there is between 150 and 250 million barrels too much oil in the market.

"It will take time between

now and year end 1999 to withdraw this overhang," Naimi said in Norway attending a consultative meeting with Oil and Energy Minister Mari Arnstad.

Naimi said the supply glut had far more bearing on the state of the oil price than the conflict in Iraq.

"There is too much oil on the market to worry about what is happening in Iraq," he said.

Iraq, which is considered one of the big oil exporters in the world market, has suffered a long absence from OPEC meetings earlier this decade, but returned to the stage in 1996 when the UN permitted it to resume oil sales under the oil-for-food program.

Economic sources at Iraq's northern border with Turkey, where a pipeline runs crude oil to the Turkish Mediterranean coast, said that oil sales continued as normal despite the small breaks at the beginning. The UN said that it would try its best to maintain exports of oil during the crisis. Iraq's Ambassador to the UN, Nizar Hamdoun, threatened to stop the oil exports when the air strikes take place.

Oil prices, however, spiked higher again in Asia in response to the attacks. But traders were already limited to the sustained flow of Iraqi crude supplies.



Nissan Motor President Yoshikazu Hanwa unveils his new vehicle "Tino" at a Tokyo hotel, 22 December. Nissan has launched the vehicle for sale in Japan today at price from about 1,700,000 to 2,200,000 yen (about \$14,530 to \$18,800) Reuters

Investing in the future is a new dream come true for Arab inventor

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

THE WORLD'S increasing concern for saving the environment is urging both ordinary people and experts to look for ways to decrease the on-going destruction of the world's ecology. One of the concerns is the depletion of the ozone layer high up in the atmosphere.

Since the beginning of 1980s, experts have often warned of an impending global warming, caused by using and manufacturing chemical and other gases that are harmful to the atmosphere.

Such gases, like the Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC), known as Freon, are of simple gaseous compounds that are used for refrigerants and aerosol propellants. It's widely considered that these gases are suspected of being major causes of stratospheric ozone depletion.

HRD Technology Inc. is just one of the many companies who are engaged in manufacturing an ozone-safe refrigerant gases and computer chips cleaners.

Founded in the US city of Belton (in Texas), HRD has become officially licensed in December 1997.

It took some time to develop its new type of refrigerants under the name of 'Alternative Refrigerants', or otherwise known as AR, since it is a registered trademark of HRD Technology.

Credit must go to its inventor, Bill Hassani, an Arab-American living in California, who spent most of his time developing and creating the best and adequate formula during the last seven years.

Now he has two patents filed in the US government. Mr Hassani told The Star that he has developed more efficient refrigerants that are completely safe to the ozone.

"Since 1991, I became increasingly aware that the world is in panic about the

CFC gases, these were later discontinued but they caused a sharp rise in the prices of Freon containers which jumped from \$30 to \$700," said Mr Hassani, chairman of HRD Technology.

As a result there was a demand for replacement from the international community. Because of this the Dupont company invented a new gas, HFC-134a. However, this gas has several setbacks.

"Anyone who needs to use the gas must retrofit the equipment, which means a complete change of hoses, pipes and compressors, that may cost you at least \$1000," said Mr Hassani.

The 134a gas is also very toxic and can cause death without prior warning (from 134a Material Safety Data Sheet), and can form corrosion inside the refrigerant system, and has a very high global warming potential with low thermal performance.

It is because of these reasons that Mr Hassani started to think of other alternative earth-friendly refrigerants.

"I came up with several ideas, some of them didn't work while others worked but with no efficiency. Soon after, I invented a new refrigerant gas with the help of my son, Daniel."

Mr Hassani elaborated that he tested the gas on his car and then on the air-conditioning unit before introducing it to the public domain. "These tests cost me a lot of money and long years of working," added Mr Hassani.



Hassani explaining his new ozone-friendly invention

Since regular Freon has been recognized a causing danger to the ozone layer, the United Nations interdicted its usage in the world.

This meant that there was a greater need for more alternatives. By 1997, Mr Hassani introduced his new invention to the world regarding the best hydrocarbon refrigerant with more adequate fire-retardant.

The high-quality refrigerant can be used in any kind of refrigeration machinery, and an organic non-depleting ozone compound.

Three types of the refrigerant were produced under the term AR (AR-12A, AR-22A, and AR-502A). These refrigerants guaranteed to work in all systems replacing the current refrigerants of (R-12, R-22, R-502, and R-134A).

"The efficiency of AR refrigerants can go up to 32 percent which means less wear on the refrigeration system with higher energy savings," defined Mr Hassani. He said that the gas can't be caustic if contaminated with moisture or oxygen, the AR gases are one of the most conductors of heat in the world, requiring less compression.

The most convincing argument, however, is the reliability of this system, which is bound to have fewer compressor failures. The close chemical common formula between hydrocarbon and mineral oil, means that there is no interfering chemical interaction. Hydrocarbon compressors run for many years.

"The only disadvantage of the AR refrigerants that are flammable with an ignition temperature of 1710 F, which is impossible to be reached," Mr Hassani is currently considering opening up a plant in the United Arab Emirates.

"I arrived in Dubai in October 1998 to start the paperwork for the possible construction of the plant. The idea came in as my old friend, Bajles Abdo, helped me to make the visit possible and to introduce the

Business Chronicle

Jordan's economy tied to Iraqi dilemma

THE THREE-day bombing of Iraq last week by US and British military forces, will certainly affect the Kingdom's in the medium and long-terms, economic experts fear.

However, oil and food supplies are still plentiful, and government officials have confirmed that things remain under control. And in this respect, the national reserves appear to be normal.

Nevertheless, the government should remain diligent about any upcoming possibilities. After all, US officials say that they would keep their options open regarding another strike, or strikes on Iraq.

Minister of Information, Nasser Joudeh, reassured last week that if there is any shortage of food, Jordan would seek other alternatives. But what does this statement actually mean? It wasn't clarified by the Minister. There is always the possibility that we could ask other neighboring countries for help, particularly in the area of fuel oil.

The government announced its decision, on the first day of Ramadan, to decrease prices of bread and flour. It is hoped that bakeries would stick to the new pricing without lessening the quality of either the flour or bread.

The prices of flour reached JD 100-113 per ton. Although experts estimated Jordan's consumption of flour this Ramadan, and the months afterwards to reach skyhigh.

And they are already warning of food shortages that may happen because of increased demand. It is consumers that could create unnecessary shortage of supply, something which in the end create a price spiral. And in such a situation what could the government do.

After all, Jordan is a free-market where supply and demand dictate prices. However, the government's role should be in acting as an 'observer' and an 'observer'. That could have a marked effect on the control of prices.

Officials are saying that the Kingdom's reserves of oil products would be more than enough for the next 90 days.

Officials define their measure of success in strikes

By Bradley Graham

WASHINGTON—After attacking nearly 100 targets with 415 cruise missiles and hundreds of bombs, US forces left tons of rubble last week where Iraq's Republican Guard soldiers once slept, other security and intelligence units once worked and President Saddam Hussein once pursued schemes to expand his missile arsenal.

But even as President Clinton was declaring the air strikes a success and ending the operation late Saturday, the Pentagon was acknowledging that it had only a sketchy view of the impact that four nights of bombing had on the functioning of Saddam Hussein's military and security networks.

In preliminary estimates released earlier in the day, Pentagon analysts reported only 28 of the 97 targets hit in the first three nights as having been destroyed or severely damaged. Another 46 were characterized as lightly or moderately damaged and the remaining 23 have yet to be assessed.

Seeking to reconcile the victory claims with the damage assessments, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, held what amounted to a seminar Saturday on how the Pentagon estimates destruction, insisting that even damage rated "light" or "moderate" in official reports can mean that the target was put out of business.

Cohen and Shelton, appearing jointly, said a detailed understanding of how much the military operation stymied Iraq's plans to make nuclear, biological and chemical weapons would take weeks, if not months. At the same time, they acknowledged that Iraq is likely to begin quickly to rebuild the damaged facilities.

"From the beginning of this operation, we've been careful to set realistic goals," Cohen said. "We've also been careful not to either overstate or exaggerate the results as intelligence

of the targets and the fact that some targets struck earlier in the week were hit again during the third night.

To demonstrate how the Pentagon's preliminary damage assessments often fail to convey the full impact of an attack, Cohen cited the terrorist bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. He said that while the attack rendered the building functionally useless, US government analysts looking at aerial photos initially rated the destruction as moderate.

age there as light to moderate. Producing an aerial picture of the Tajiri missile repair complex, Shelton pointed to several buildings hit by US forces last week, causing varying degrees of damage from moderate to severe.

"My point is, none of these buildings within this compound were assessed as destroyed; not even one," the general said. "Our analysts are appropriately very conservative in their initial assessments. But in my view, this facility will not be usable for Saddam's efforts to maintain or improve his missile capabilities in the years ahead."

"I'd also like to point out, as you can see, many of the buildings in this facility appear to be undamaged," he went on. "And the reason for that is because they were not targeted. We only went after specific buildings within the compound—again, ones that were related to our mission objectives."

The attacks on missile production and research facilities, where US officials said Iraq was working on long-range systems that could deliver weapons of mass destruction, were particularly important to the US war plan. All the more so since administration officials, to avoid civilian casualties, ruled out air strikes against other commercial and industrial facilities with potential to manufacture chemical and biological weapons that these missiles could carry.

In addition to crippling the missile effort, Cohen and Shelton said the air strikes caused significant damage to Saddam Hussein's security service and his communications, intelligence gathering and propaganda networks.

"Saddam may rebuild and attempt to rebuild some of this military infrastructure in the future, just as he has replaced many facilities, including lavish palaces after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Cohen said.

"But we have diminished his ability to threaten his neighbors with both conventional and nonconventional weapons."



Iraqis reading newspapers with a portrait of a smiling President Saddam Hussein in the background

analysts study the very preliminary data."

Shelton declared himself "very pleased with the results of the operation thus far," but conceded that the way in which the Pentagon reports its bombing results can give a less positive picture.

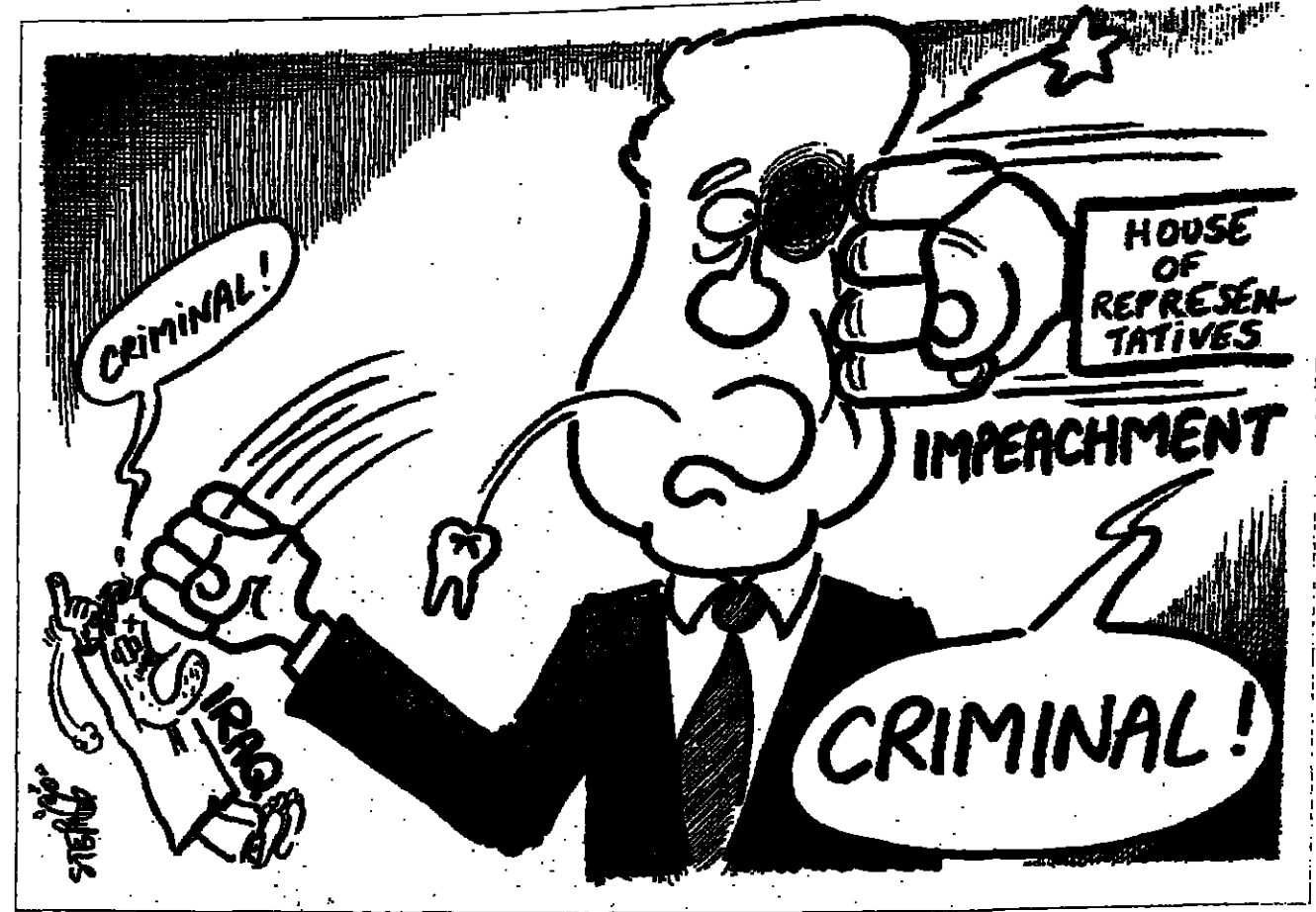
The damage assessment released Saturday showed somewhat greater destruction than a report Friday after the second night. Officials attributed this both to closer analysis

"Some have characterized moderate damage as somehow being less than successful," Cohen said. "But when we make these preliminary assessments, what looks either to be light or moderate cannot be calibrated in terms of a normal understanding."

Shelton made the same point, citing the examples of the truck bombings earlier this year of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. He said US analysts had categorized the dam-

age there as light to moderate. Producing an aerial picture of the Tajiri missile repair complex, Shelton pointed to several buildings hit by US forces last week, causing varying degrees of damage from moderate to severe.

"My point is, none of these buildings within this compound were assessed as destroyed; not even one," the general said. "Our analysts are appropriately very conservative in their initial assessments. But in my view, this facility will not be usable for Saddam's efforts to maintain or improve his missile capabilities in the years ahead."



Raids leave Iraqi capital a city of contrasts

By Howard Schneider

BAGHDAD—They were scattered and relatively inconspicuous, hard to identify except for such telltale signs as blasted windows, sagging roofs or burn marks.

After three nights of US and British airstrikes against the Iraqi capital, there were no smoking piles of rubble, collapsed bridges or severed highways. The city and its people continued to function quite normally.

But tucked away near highway overpasses or wedged behind apartments and office complexes was the evidence of the cruise missiles that came thundering in from planes and ships in the Gulf: A series of government buildings, thought to be critical to the Iraqi regime, that appeared largely intact from the outside were likely in tatters within.

En route to spots around the city, one caught an occasional glimpse of a security complex, for example, struck by as many as three missiles near the UN headquarters outside Baghdad. The roof of one building had collapsed onto the top floor in one corner, while the walls of a second were charred and windowless.

The top floors of a military-industry office complex were also windowless, although little other damage was apparent from the small portion of the building that was visible from the road outside the al-Rasheed Hotel.



Iraqi citizens examine one of the sites in Baghdad devastated by US-British strikes

caused by US and British missiles could not be described with any accuracy, Iraqi officials have not allowed journalists to tour any damaged structures and were providing only a partial list of targeted sites.

But diplomats with more freedom of movement around Baghdad said the air raids had created an eerie contrast between the unimpeded flow of daily life in the city and the heavy pounding of the past three nights. There has been no major disruption of electricity, water service or commerce, a

state of affairs that to some here seemed hardly possible given the noise and seeming chaos of each night.

"What struck me as remarkable is that Baghdad seems to be a different city by day than what we see during the bombardment at night," said Fraksh Shah, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy to Iraq. "People move freely. There does not seem to be any panic at all despite the intense bombardment."

It is wrong, however, to say that things are normal here, and

the strangeness of the times made itself felt at unexpected moments.

Outside UN headquarters—where the windows had been taped carefully to prevent injuries from shattered glass—spent shells, apparently from Iraqi gunners, fell from the sky at midday. "We are having an instance of antiaircraft shells falling," a security guard said over a loudspeaker. "Please remain indoors."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Stop the genocide against Iraqi civilians

Mr Kofi Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations, New York

Your Excellency

The current irrational, savage bombing of Iraqi civilians by the United States and Britain is a genocide approved by the United Nations Security Council. It is a disgrace to witness missiles and bombs killing innocent Iraqi civilians. This is an added misery to the Iraqi people who have been suffering from strict UN sanctions for the past seven years which has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of children, according to your own UN reports.

The UN ideally supports negotiation and diplomacy, while protecting human dignity, security and international legitimacy. The current excessive and terrifying bombing of Iraq, in addition to the genocide resulting from sanctions, reveals a failure of diplomacy, a failure which reflects adversely on your own credibility. No political, diplomatic or moral advantage can be achieved by the continued slaughter of Iraqi civilians.

Yes, we support the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction produced by all countries alike without singling out Iraq. But how many innocent Iraqi children have to die to satisfy the United Nations? The world needs wisdom, leadership and courage to stop this genocide. Stop the bombing and the sanction. If you fail to act you should resign. Otherwise you will go into history as a world leader who

approved genocide against Iraqi civilians.

Sincerely,
Joseph R. Halek
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http://home.pacbell.net/newsarc

Bombs on Baghdad—I am ashamed

I am ashamed because innocent children and women have to die. I am ashamed that a western great power country has to bring a bomb damage to a population, which had to suffer more than ten years in the past. Due to the embargo the medical supply for children and weak people is terrible. I am ashamed because we are of the opinion that we have to transfer our "western way of thinking" on other countries and religions. I am ashamed there are bombs on Baghdad!!!

Who has shown us the proofs that there are extermination arms? Innocent children and women have to die because of an exhibition of arms, the influence of capital and the deflection of internal affairs. I am ashamed because everybody has a look at this tragedy. I do not agree with the way of acting of Saddam Hussain, but do we act as Christians when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and at the same time innocent children and women have to die between Euphrat and Tigris.

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Arabs denounce assaults on Iraq

By Daniel Williams

AMMAN—A groundswell of protests against the bombing of Iraq roiled the Middle East Saturday. In particularly violent incidents, mobs assaulted American and British diplomatic buildings in Damascus, where Syrian guards and US Marines rescued the wife of US Ambassador Ryan Crocker as rioters broke into the couple's residence.

A State Department official said that Christine Crocker was safe but declined to give details about her escape or the whereabouts of embassy personnel. US diplomats are especially concerned about security in the wake of terror attacks on embassies in Kenya and Tanzania earlier this year.

The demonstrations unsettled a normally placid day for Muslims—the beginning of Ramadan, the holy month of

fasting, feasting and prayer. Several Arab newspapers criticized the muted response of most Middle East governments to the scenes of destruction and injury in Baghdad.

Until Saturday, protests largely had been peaceful, except in Palestinian towns in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. With demonstrations apparently taking a militant turn on the fourth day of bombing, the chances began to dim that the

United States can expect any kind of Arab backing for much longer.

Political demonstrations are rare in Syria under the iron rule of President Hafez Assad. But hundreds of youthful protesters surrounded the US embassy in Damascus and chanted "Down with America" as they pelted the building with rocks, breaking some windows. A few demonstrators scaled the embassy walls and hauled down and burned the American flag.

US Marine guards fired tear gas. Small crowds later assaulted an American cultural center and the home of Crocker, the US ambassador. A few score protesters broke into the house and rampaged through an office and the kitchen, upending books and tossing furniture outside. Protesters also shattered the headlights and windows of Crocker's car. Someone produced a bra, wrote the name Monica on it and waved it to the jeering crowd.

A mob broke into an American school and the US Cultural Center. Others threw stones at the British Embassy and the British Council, which holds English language classes and cultural programs. The State Department protested the Syrian failure to protect the American buildings and occupants.

Syrian police had tried to use water cannons to break up the rioters, but their vehicle was blocked by protesters. In all, the unrest lasted about six hours, according to wire reports. About a dozen demonstrators were hospitalized to recover from the effects of tear gas.

Syrians in the ancient capital. Marchers carried banners that read "The Syrian people are with you, our Iraqi brothers." Syria and Iraq have long been political rivals, but recently, Damascus has backed Iraq's call for an end to the eight-year-old UN trade embargo against Baghdad.

In the West Bank, Palestinian protesters clashed with Israeli troops near a Jewish settlement in Hebron. They hurled rocks, bottles and Molotov cocktails. Soldiers fired back marble-shaped bullets and tear gas.

In Amman Saturday, about 2,000 students at the campus of Jordan University staged a protest against Operation Desert Fox, code name for the attack on Iraq.

The students tried to burn an American flag but it failed to ignite.

Jordanian police blocked them from carrying their protest onto Amman's quiet streets. Security forces also kept close watch on other demonstrations outside of mosques in the cities of Irbid and Maan.

Demonstrations also took in Yemen and Sudan and among Arab immigrant groups in Europe.

The coincidence of the bombing raids and the beginning of Ramadan also created a stream of anger in mosques. In Amman on Ramadan eve, Islamic politicians rallied at Arab leaders for their inaction. "Iraq is being slaughtered while they are looking on," said Haruzeh Mansour, a member of the Islamic Action Front.



Palestinian youths in the West Bank demonstrating...

The attacks coincided with a demonstration of thousands of

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Love on the net or the rocks

Traditional dating agencies now compete with the web

By Lesley Downer

As Zsa-Zsa Gabor once said: "I want a man who is kind and understanding. Is that too much to ask of a millionaire?" Debra Willis is a good-looking, bubbly 35-year-old banker in the City of London earning £100,000 a year, with a penthouse in Docklands. She has it all except for one thing: A man. A millionaire will do just fine.

So, as a 1990s woman in charge of her own destiny, she decides to use the most up-to-the-minute method of finding one via the Internet.

The Internet is big business and so is the lonely hearts industry. Put the two together and you get chemistry. Next month sees the launch of MatchNet.com (www.matchnet.com), designed to be an Internet dating agency for the likes of Debra Willis.

Says Nigel Coster, operations director: "High achievers have less time so they have more need of an Internet dating service." He points out that in three to five years, 95 percent of the country could have access to the Internet via television sets. MatchNet plc's initial offer for subscription generated £250,000; the target is £1.5 million.

It is easy to see why investors go dewy-eyed over the dating business. Anyone joining a dating agency has to fill in a lengthy form listing his (or her) income, occupation, likes and dislikes thereby creating a valuable database for advertisers.

Columbus, the publishing and information group, recently paid £1.45 million for the venerable dating agency Dateline, primarily for its client database.

But what is in it for the punter? Willis's quest began with www.jdate.com, the American Jewish Singles Dating Agency upon which MatchNet will be modelled. The on-screen form took 30 minutes to fill in and, besides, basic information, required essays on topics such as "my ideal first date."

A JDate search for a professional male aged between 30 and 55, between 5ft 8in and 6ft 3in tall and living in the London area, generated an accountant, a company director and an investment analyst writer. Some of the profiles included photographs.

Responses came from Jim, an investment analyst from New York, Stephen from the English Midlands and Michael from California, whose annual income was more than

\$100,000 from an occupation he described only as "Something Fun That I Love".

Willis also tried out other agencies call up www.cupidnet.com and a list of more than 100 appears, although caution is needed: even those with the most innocuous-sounding names usually turn out to be offering Russian or Thai mail order "brides".

And the Internet agency, www.photo-personals.co.uk, which looked straightforward at first glance, and upon which Willis posted an ad, was not what she was seeking at all. The next day she

says David Carter: "It's dangerous, insecure, needle-in-a-haystack stuff." Carter, a development capitalist, recently took over the veteran introduction agency Virginia Charles and has now negotiated a merger with Only Lunch, a service targeting professionals who meet for lunch much less successful. Dating, he says, is the business of the future: in 10 years the industry will be worth £1 billion.

As more and more women take on senior roles at work, office romance is

he said, he had enjoyed several interesting meetings and made new friends, though as yet there was no romance. He asked if he could see me again and it seemed only fair to tell him that, in my case too, romance was not going to be on the cards.

Sirius has a pool of 10,000 people and costs £468 for a year's membership.

Another agency, Sara Eden at the platinum card end of the spectrum has a pool of 2,000 members and costs £695. Founded and run by Karen Mooney, Sara Eden used to be known as the "beautiful people's agency". After a long interview, you sort through heaps of personal profiles of people who might be right for you, each with several photographs, and decide whom you would like to meet.

There is also a secret list of high-profile members who can choose but not be chosen. My shelf of potential partners included doctors, lawyers, media people and a yachtsman.

Only Lunch is smaller, newer and slightly more expensive (£750 with 750 members). Your lunch is a blind date; you know nothing about your partner except a first name and the fact that he or she has been chosen as someone you might like.

I arrived, feeling rather nervous, at a quiet restaurant in central London and asked the waiter surreptitiously for the Only Lunch table. To my relief, "Jim" turned out to be a highly presentable, dapper, articulate businessman. Like Barry, he too had spent many years abroad.

I began to build a picture of dating agency customers as winners, rather than the sad losers one tends to assume them to be. They tend to be people who have lived abroad and have lost their British inhibitions about going for what they want.

At the end of the meal, the moment arrived when we would have to decide whether or not to exchange phone numbers. We both said "Good Luck", the code for "Well, I won't be seeing you again".

Whether you go for the Internet, the traditional hand-picked approach, or a blind date set up by friends, there is one inescapable problem. All these methods operate on the basis that you know what you are looking for and that your ideal partner will be someone with whom you have something in common whereas, as we all know, love is a lot more complicated than that.

Financial Times Syndication

'You've got mail'

Modem romance

By Rita Kempley

There's no swapping spit in cyberspace, so playing post office just isn't what it used to be. Online love affairs, as "You've Got Mail" demonstrates, may be intriguing, even intimate, but they are also wordy and physically chaste. The Internet is unlikely to replace intercourse.

Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks type their little hearts out in director Nora Ephron's easy, breezy and aggressively adorable comic romance. Based upon 1940's "The Shop Around the Corner," the movie updates that tale of anonymous pen pals by moving the correspondence from the mailbox to modem.

Joe Fox (Hanks) and Kathleen Kelly (Ryan), a pair of Upper West Siders, travel in the same circles, work in the same industry, even buy their skim latte grande from the same Starbucks. They've also been sharing nakedly honest, increasingly affectionate e-mail as NY152 and Shogirl. Yet they've never laid eyes on each other.

When they do eventually meet, they know each other only as bitter business rivals. Joe, the savvy heir to a chain of Borders-like emporiums, has just opened a branch in the neighborhood that has long been the home of Kathleen's children's bookstore.

With its deep discounts, huge inventory, comfy sofas and coffee bar, Fox Books seems certain to put Kathleen's quaint, cozy, child-friendly Shop Around the Corner right out of business. As she begins to lose money and her clientele, Shogirl appeals to NY152, who urges her to go to war with the competition.

Though the pair are clearly meant for one another, the inevitable denouement is complicated not only by their initial enmity, but also their relationship with a shrill book editor (Parker Posey) and a smug newspaper columnist (Greg Kinnear). Kathleen and Joe make up the main dish, but these two are just the parsley on the plate. Like Jean Stapleton, Dave Chappelle and Danny Coleman, who also have supporting roles, the off-leads are poorly served by these underwritten and largely insignificant parts.

Ephron, who wrote the adaptation with her sister Delia, makes barbed observations



Tom Hanks

about the Capitalization of America and the latte and laptop culture, waxes riotous on men's obsession with the "Godfather" movies and generally abides by the time-honored gets-girl formula.

Alas, there is really no graceful or honorable way to end the story once Joe learns that Kathleen is his cyber-soulmate and continues to keep his silence. In his reluctance to ruin the relationship, he becomes a sneak and a liar. And the Ephron sisters seem to have concluded that it's fine to be taken in by a rapacious businessman as long as he's really funny and cute.

Despite all the lip service paid to the battle of the bookstores, the Little Shop's fate always seems as inescapable as Starbucks. Funny the coffee-house conglomerate should be so prominently featured, considering the movie's seeming contempt for mega-chains and for yuppies who equate coffee with culture. (It's probably futile to point out that Starbucks was once a small business in Seattle. That's why they're sleepless there.)

"You've Got Mail" is primarily an attempt to cash in on the potent chemistry between Hanks and Ryan, who radiate warmth like a couple of space heaters. Maybe Hanks represents corporate greed, but he's no Gordon Gekko. He comes off as a benign businessman who just wants to make books more affordable to more readers.

And Ryan's Kathleen is hardly an independent woman of the 90s. She's not a woman at all. Dressed in cuddly-wuddly little jammies and woolly socks on more than one occasion, she's downright infantile. Perhaps getting out of the children's book business would be a good thing for this poor woman after all.

Though it turns on timely issues and lobs zingers at trendy poseurs, "You've Got Mail" is as old-fashioned as snail mail. But, in these uneasy times, it is a welcome delivery.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Iraqi capital contrasts



faults on the

Yugoslavia through the looking glass

By Nader Ajallat and Mohammed Salameh of Ad Dustour

THE YUGOSLAV plane takes off from Queen Alia Airport, enroute to Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital, on a special visit organized for a delegation from the Jordanian press. The visit came in response to an invitation by Jibad Mdanat, general agent of Yugoslav Airlines in Amman.

Our first day started with a comprehensive tour around Belgrade, to get acquainted with the natural beauty of this city. The second day was more official, since the delegation held meetings with a number of Yugoslav officials and discussed with them their mutual interests in the aviation and tourism sectors. Yugoslav Ministers of Tourism, Foreign Affairs and Health attended the meeting. Yugoslavia was and is still considered as one of the most beautiful countries in Europe.

Its history dates back to 5000 BC, and it lies in south-east Europe. The area, estimated at 102,173 square kilometers, is situated on the main road between Europe and Asia. Over 11 million people are living in the country, which faced many tensions and civil wars.

Although the weather is extremely cold, people carry on with their life in a normal manner. Belgrade, has a long history of civilizations and traditions. Its name comes from the old tribe of Slavs, who lived in the area during the sixth century. Belgrade means "The White City," which was given to the city following an admirable resistance during a siege that the city underwent.

Walking in the city, you can pass by the famous bridge of the Danube river, busy markets, press centers, theatres and exhibition halls, trading centers, hotels and houses which demonstrate the harmony of traditional and modern buildings.

According to latest excavations, Belgrade was first inhabited in the 5000 BC. Dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages, the Romans occupied the city for four centuries before it was reconstructed by the Slavs.

Belgians, Byzantines and Hungarians ruled the city during the 9th, 10th, and



obtaining independence in 1878 under Serbian rule. The city was also occupied by the German troops during World War II. Belgrade is considered today as one of the most developed cities in Europe—the last 50 years were decisive in its history—since its people worked hard to develop and promote the industrial and tourism sectors in their city.

Leaving Belgrade, Yugoslavia maybe better known for its mineral hot springs, where people from all over the world come to benefit from the healthy effects of this water on the human body.

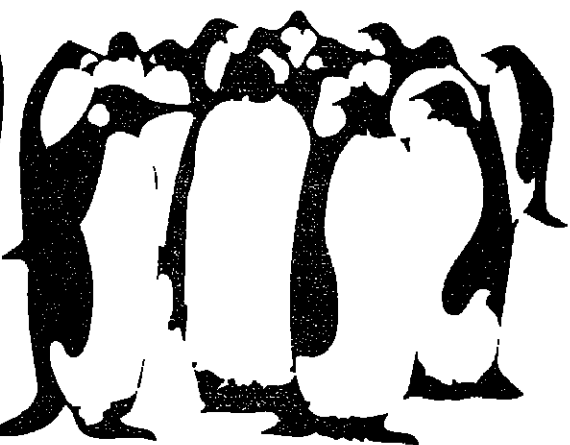
Over 150 health resorts are now available in Yugoslavia. Most of them were built during the old Roman rule. Some of these resorts are the Franciscanija, and Sokopanja resorts.

These locations are not only known for their beautiful scenery, where the evergreens and recreation parks are located in and around the springs. Many people visit these resorts every year to undergo therapeutic sessions that usually takes weeks.

The week-long visit came to its end, and we didn't feel the time passing by. We came back to Jordan with fruitful memories about a country we fell in love with.

09.12.1998

ROUND OWN



● Engineer Ghobashi Ahmed Hassan recently joined Le Meridien Amman. Mr Hassan worked at Le Meridien Hotels since 1983, also he worked at Le Meridien Cairo, Le Meridien Palestine Baghdad, Le Meridien Abu Dhabi and Le Meridien Heliopolis. Mr Ghobashi is fully experienced in Engineering and Renovations at hotels.



SCRAPBOOK Great Expectations!

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

IF CHARLES Dickens was alive today, his writings would have been different than before. Born in February 1812 at Landport, Dickens led a life of poverty and labor. He supported his family, worked in factories, and dropped out of school. Later on, he grew up to be one of the most remarkable novelists of all time.

His novels are the true manifestations of the suffering of the poor, the orphan and the abandoned. *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Great Expectations* are among the novelist's masterpieces.

His interwoven words, sensuous expressions, fluid metaphors and universal proverbs capture one's senses into a world of reality and fiction.

Moreover, Dickens' portrayal of poverty and social injustice has traveled the earth, entering almost every school and university. Whenever masters like Dickens write, they evoke the mind and carve words of wisdom on the shores of history.

Today, if Charles Dickens opened his eyes to read the papers of our own history, he would write novels of political injustice, poverty and social reform. If he took a walk in the cities and towns of Palestine, the dignified mountains of Lebanon, the wrecks of Iraqi homes and tombs of civilian deaths, he would write "A Tale of Two Arabs", "Arabic Twist", and "Low Expectations".

However, he wouldn't have enough time to cover all the events in the region, and how could he? What would he say? I guess he would start with his famous opening from *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity..." I am sure he would write this as follows: "It was the best of times [for Zionism], it was the worst of times [for Arabs], it was the epoch of belief [in the name of oppression], it was the epoch of incredulity [in the name of freedom]!"

The fact is that neither Dickens nor any master novelist could portray what truth itself could not utter. Anyway, there are people who are already standing for our rights, and fighting over our misfortunes. We are proud of the UN, the mother of all the poor, the occupied and the abused!

All in all, our "great expectations" are still high. We believe in God, the holy books and judgment day, and that's enough I guess!

If we could ask Dickens about his opinion, he would eventually say: "...there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice..."

OFF THE WALL

By Rana Haddad

Buying a dress!

THIS TIME of the year is known for paying, paying and more paying! Indeed, this is the season of festivities, not only is this the holy month of Ramadan but of Christmas too. And in this respect, it is not a good idea to go shopping right now for prices are skyrocketing, but will people listen, definitely not.

However, the other day my aunt phoned me to go shopping with her. She wanted to buy something for herself just before the rush for the celebrations, and she was quite right too. We first went window shopping, they were full of the things that you would wish to have. After a while my aunt liked a dress, and we went in one of the shops. After trying the dress out for size, the real battle started. But up till now, I can't for the life of me understand how could such a dress deserve the asking price of JD 175.

At first I thought I heard the salesman say JD 75, and said that it was a bit expensive for such a dress, but he lambasted that the price was JD 175. I will never forget the way he said it. A moment of silence then passed before my aunt recollected her thoughts and just said "for what?" The salesman then started what sellers usually do to entice customers to buy. "This was made in England, you won't find another piece if you go all over the country, look at the fabrics it will remain the same even after 20 years." My aunt became upset, and we immediately left the shop. Fortunately, after more looking around, my aunt found a dress which she really liked, and it was much cheaper.

But why do prices shoot up on these occasions? Is it the fault of sellers? Well, that might be partly the case. But the final blame must lie with consumers who all go at the same time to buy their shopping. And the moral of the tale is to buy in stages!

Dia Azzawi's panorama featured in Amman



Photo by Salah Mubarak

Amman(Star)—In preparation for its soft opening in late December 1998, Grand Hyatt Amman has invited London-based Iraqi artist Dia Azzawi to install his five-meter long wall relief, *Mashhad Sharqi* (Eastern scene), which was expressly created for the Grand Lobby of the hotel. In conjunction with the installation, Grand Hyatt Amman has invited gallery directors and members of the local media to launch a press conference to view the artwork and meet with the artist. Also on display during this event is a selection of limited edition silk-screen prints from Azzawi's *Seven Golden Odes* (1979) and *Al Jawahiri Verses* (1989).

Azzawi's *Mashhad Sharqi* is a two-dimensional composition, cut and reas-

sembled into a three-dimensional wall relief of 10 overlapping parts, creating an architectural construction that takes the shape of its slightly convex background. Through this abstract composition, one perceives geometric patterns inspired by Arabic folklore, arabesque design and old stained glass.

These elements combined succeed in producing a work of art capable of establishing a dialogue with viewers of varied geographical and cultural backgrounds. *Mashhad Sharqi* has been executed in acrylic and gold leaf on wood and canvas, and is 260 x 5000 centimeters in size.

Al-Mu'allaqat (The Seven Golden Odes), also on display for the occasion, are a collection of limited edition silk-screen prints inspired by the work of pre-Islamic poets, such as

"Umu'ul Qais, Antara bin Shaddad and Tarfa Ibnul' Abd.

The odes, each considered the best piece by its author, were embroidered on the curtain of the temple in Mecca and are thus considered among the first Arabic poems ever to be recorded in writing. These odes enjoy a unique position in Arabic literature, representing the finest of early Arabic poetry. The seven meeting rooms at the Grand Hyatt Amman have been named after the seven poets in Azzawi's *Al Mu'allaqat*, and will each feature one of the silk-screen prints.

Azzawi is among the few Arab artists who have been successful in combining the eastern and western artistic traditions. As one art critic puts it, "Dia Azzawi's deep attachment to his cultural heritage is to find a visual lan-

guage that is both Arab and universal." He incorporates Arabic themes and calligraphy into his work in such a way that they become an integral part of the design. The result is a visual feast of colors and textures, and an equally powerful intellectual experience.

Born and educated in Iraq, Azzawi has lived in London since 1976. His work is well known in Europe and throughout the Arab world. He has participated in both solo and group exhibitions in various parts of the world since 1965.

Among his numerous public collections are the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the British Museum, London; the Biblioteque Nationale, Paris; and the Gulbenkian Collection, Barcelona.

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ The American Center features a poster exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The exhibition, which includes 30 posters reflecting the history of human rights movement in the US, will be on display until 30 December.

■ The 10th anniversary exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists, is currently showing at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Al-Weibdeh, until 28 January 1999.

■ The French movie,

Nous Ne Vieillirons

Pas Ensemble (We won't grow old together) will be shown at the French Cultural Center on 28 December, twice at 6:30 and 8:30. The movie focuses on the extramarital affairs between men and women.

■ The British Council will show the movie *Mr Bean*, starring Rowan Atkinson, on 29 December, at 6 pm. The Council also shows on 30 December, *The Famous Five*, a special display for children under 12, at 5:00 pm.

The Iraqi artists:

a legacy of elegance and innovation

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

AMIDST BENEVOLENT date trees, breathtaking landscapes and magical monuments of Babel, art was born. The wind, the sand, and the footsteps of passing civilizations have delivered a bounty of Iraqi artists, who have spread their art all over the world.

After surviving the horrors of war in Iraq, many of them decided to seek their destiny in neighboring countries.

"Lamasat" gallery is one of the most elegant prints that was created by young Iraqi artists in Jordan.

"I wasn't really willing to establish this gallery until financial support was available," said Hisham Yaqut, the manager of the gallery, and a well acclaimed artist who studied theater direction and fine art back in Iraq.

The gallery holds a variety of drawings and portraits from different art schools, like abstract, realistic and natural drawings. "Our work is different and innovative. Starting with photo-realism, expressionism, and ending with contemporary art," explained Yaqut.

The fluctuation between simplicity and complexity invites the viewer into a world of spiritual orientalism.

Yaqut's drawings presents the artist's

ability in mastering different styles of art schools. "Art is a didactic tool, it is a way of life. We are keen on portraying our own modern vision and innovation to the public," Yaqut went on to say.

In addition, Yaqut is also responsible for the choice of frames, which can't but capture your eyes by its light colors.

Ameer Hussien, "another contributing artist, has the fluid touch of a photographer, where he presents art in motion. One of his drawings conveys dancers moving in a free pace, a spiritual snap shot of beauty.

Hassan Musa's works vary between natural landscapes and abstract figures. "In art, there is the beautiful and the ugly, and I believe that any artist must portray both elements in utmost enlightenment and innovation," said Musa. He pointed out that war is one of the most dominant themes in his paintings. "An artist must be born from an experience, which would elevate his senses to the nirvana of expression and spirituality," he concluded.

One of his mesmerizing paintings is an abstract drawing, which appears to contain figures of multi-dimensional angles. The soundless expression of this picture is one of the most appealing works in the gallery.

In relation to the public's interest in art,

Qahtan Adna, who is specialized in wood works, said that Jordanian appreciation remains immature. "Honestly, I was shocked when I first came to Jordan. Art is still considered to be an entertainment object among people here," complained Adna.

However, Musa and Yaqut believe that there are Jordanian artists with growing potentials. Moreover, the Jordanian experience is still in a process of creation.

On the other hand, the Iraqi artists call on officials to elevate the intellectual and artistic activities held in Jordan, as a step towards lifting public's taste and intellectuality. The gallery is welcoming its visitors in the holy month of Ramadan from 2-8 pm, and from 12-8 pm after the end of the holy month.

Moreover, gallery "Lamasat" will hold an exhibition presenting works from different Iraqi artists under the theme of "war and its outcomes." The artist will present their own vision in dealing with such universal issues through the language of color and light.

Hisham Yaqut will also be presenting a one man show exhibition where he will focus on the idea of pollution and industrialization.

All in all, Iraqis have proven again to be one of the messengers for a sublime, sensuous legacy of art.



A crowd of happy children from the Holy Land, pictured here with a group of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan staff, who visited the school to celebrate Christmas. Santa Claus distributed presents to the children while the children sang for the occasion. The children from the Hotel Ya Hala group performed folkloric dances.

A group of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan staff, pictured here with a team from Mansour Orphanage to celebrate Christmas. Santa Claus distributed gifts to the children who sang for the occasion.

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV2
from 26—31 December

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari (Religious program)
3:10—Animanics
3:30—The Adventure of the Bush Patrol
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:45—Maghreb call to prayer
5:05—French Programs
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz (Arabic series)
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—The Changing world of Islam (Religious program)
8:30—The Pretender (Drama)
9:15—ABC of Democracy
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—New series

SUNDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—Pink Panther (cartoon)
3:30—Life Of
4:00—Documentary
4:45—Maghreb call to prayer
5:05—French Programs
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Brittas Empire
8:00—Journey in the Muslim World (Documentary)
8:30—Walker/Texas ranger (Police Drama)
9:05—Farming & Ecology
9:30—Behind the Scene
10:00—News in English
10:30—Mini-series
11:50—Doogie Howser

MONDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—Batman



Omar Bin Abdel Aziz, Daily at 6:15 pm.

3:30—David Cooperfield (Children Drama)
4:00—French Program
4:45—Maghreb call to prayer
5:10—French Program
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Parenthood (Comedy)
8:00—Islamic arts and Antiquities (Documentary)
8:30—Big Sky
9:20—Encounter
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—F.X. The Illusion

TUESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—La Famille Gladys
3:30—Bananas in Pyjamas
4:00—Life Choices (Doc.)
4:45—Maghreb call to prayer
5:10—French Program
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Step by Step
8:00—Journey in the Muslim World
8:30—New Drama series

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Captain Ron
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): For Richer Or Poorer
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Desperate Measures
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): The Horse Whisperer
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Esmaliya, Rayeh Jay (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Maverick

9:15—You and Your Car
9:30—Uncut-with movies
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Lonesome Dove
11:15—Film:

WEDNESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—Red Beard
3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:10—French Program
4:50—Maghreb call to prayer
5:15—French Programs
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—(2 Point 4 Children)
8:00—The Changing World of Islam
8:50—N.Y.P.D.
9:30—Great Moments Of Science & Technology
9:40—Faces & Places
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The Cover Story
11:15—The Album Show

THURSDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—Superman (cartoon)
3:30—Space Precinct (Sci-fi)
4:50—Maghreb call to prayer
5:10—Sparks (Comedy)
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters (comedy)
8:00—Journey in the Muslim World
8:30—Dr Quinn: The Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:15—Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News at Ten

10:30—Film:
12:00—Dudley (Comedy)

FRIDAY
3:00—Holy Koran & Saheeh Bukhari
3:10—Animated Classics
4:00—Treasure Hunt
4:50—Maghreb call to prayer
5:25—The Simpsons
6:15—Omar Bin Abdel Aziz
7:00—News in French
7:15—Words of Wisdom
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Islamic Arts and Antiquities
8:30—Babylon 5
9:15—The BBC documentary
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
11:15—The Halifax

PROGRAMMES EN FRAN AISE

SAMEDI
17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
DIMANCHE
17:00—Le Grand Secret
19:00—Le Journal
LUNDI
17:00—Thalassé
19:00—Le Journal
MARDI
17:00—Les Yeux D'Helene
19:00—Le Journal
MERCREDI
16:00—Francis
17:00—Des trains...
19:00—Le Journal
JEUDI
15:30—B'Juckle Berry Fin
19:00—Le Journal
VENREDI
19:00—Le Journal

Programs are subject to change by JTV

'Prince of Egypt' Tale of a Hero



By Stephen Hunter

IS "Prince of Egypt" a good movie or the most expensive Sunday school filmstrip ever made? Really, so much of it begins with Moses; the concept of freedom, the sense of the worth of the individual, the idea of God as an abstract ideal of morality instead of a batch of dog-faced bullies, commandments 1 through 10, even that inconvenient one about the neighbor's wife, and the coolness of beards. Oh, and also: Judaism and Christianity, democracy and baseball, to say nothing of Shakespeare, Bogart and Faulkner.

The new animated feature from Dream Works SKG gets that. If nothing else it's a wonderful essay on the meaning of freedom and the courage it takes to wrestle it from despots. In that sense, it feels more political and cultural than religious. You don't see faith systems in opposition so much as ideas systems.

Primarily concerned with the first part of the Book of Exodus—you know, the part with all the special effects—it leaves out that dreary 40 years in the wilderness and, being aimed at families, equally omits the shimmy-shim-sham danced about the feet of the Golden Calf. We begin by watching Baby Moses basket-surf the Nile, to be rescued by an Egyptian princess. He is raised to privilege in the court as brother

to the Pharaoh to be. Upon discovering his true Hebrew identity, he suffers a crisis, flees and returns with the best slogan ever written: Let My People Go. When Pharaoh won't listen, God sends bugs and frogs. The people are ultimately let go, but then Pharaoh goes after them.

There's no revisionist carping about Red/Reed Sea transgression: This is the big wet one, baby, and Moses parts it neatly as Elvis parted his first hairdo for Ed Sullivan. When Pharaoh and his boys lumber in their chariots across the same passage, only Charlie Tuna is around to listen to their complaints.

The movie's proudest accomplishment is that it revises our version of Moses toward something more immediate and believable, more humanly knowable. This is not the time and the place to bedevil Charlton Heston, who after all can't really help being Charlton Heston. But his famous 1956 movie Moses was a reflection of a time that invested most of its authority in the severe white male, an unbending paragon of morality, strength and wisdom. Watch the news for seven or possibly as long as 11 seconds and see how far that one has fallen!

But this Moses, voiced by the less than imperial Val Kilmer, is less iconography and more human. This Moses doesn't seem to be posing for Mount Rushmore and you could never ski down his cheekbones. Wiry and Semitic, he's a man beset with doubts, who feels himself completely unworthy. When he discovers his secret heritage, he reacts more like Woody Allen than a National Rifle Association president. He gets moody, depressed and self-loathing. He wants to be hugged.

Without going too far into this matter, it seems clear that this Moses reflects the personality of his creator, Dream Works co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg. Possibly he represents a little of Katzenberg's more famous partner, Steven Spielberg, as well. Houston's Big Mo was a vision of the annoyingly Cesarean Cecil B. De Mille, a bald tyrant who stomped around movie sets in jodhpurs and cavalry boots. He believed in the principle of absolute authority—his own—and he directed with the subtlety of a man carving an angel

out of a lump of coal with a chisel.

The second virtue of "Prince of Egypt" is a superb performance. It's amazing how a great actor can dominate a project without even showing his face. I refer not to Kilmer, who is appropriately unassertive in the role, nor to the absurd Valley Girl stylings of Michelle Pfeiffer as Zipporah, Moses' wife.

No, the reigning vocal genius of "Prince of Egypt" is Ralph Fiennes as Rameses, the non-blood brother of Moses' upbringing, inheritor of the throne. It is to the production's credit that he's given a motive—his fear of being the "weak link" in pharaonic succession, of failing the empire of his fathers and his sons. But this Pharaoh, like the Moses of his position, is a man, not a symbol, and in Fiennes' reading we hear the tragedy of a king born out of time, shackled to a set of beliefs that are crumbling daily, still in tragic love with a brother who has outgrown him.

In the fight of his life, he's overmatched and he doesn't even know it. He's not going against Moses, he's up against the Big Guy Himself.

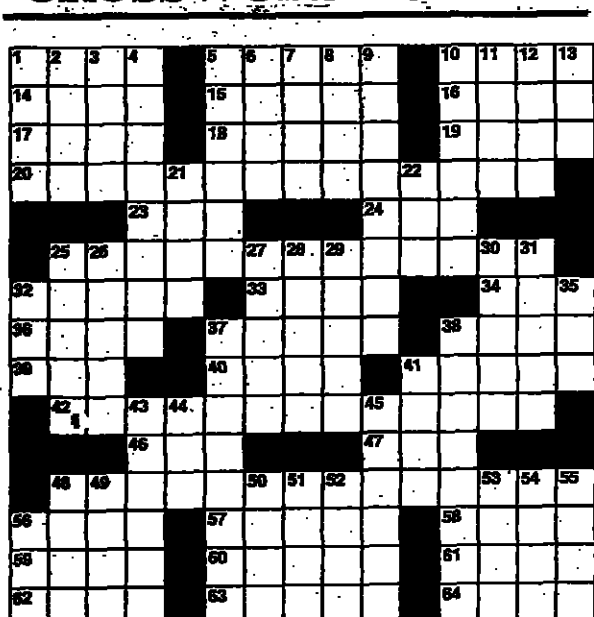
How do you fight plagues? How do you fight frogs in the billions? And that, of course, gets to the third triumph of this surprisingly short, intense film. It really rides the possibilities of animation out to the limits. The design seems drawn from some of Gustave Doré's scariest prints, and the sense of both the monumental and the inspirational is well evoked. When God sends flames to light up the Egyptian night, they glow with the incandescence of Hell on Earth. When the Red Sea parts, it ascends to Heaven, a great backlit wall of undulating, light-diffusing water.

Likewise, the Egyptian architecture has been cleverly created to carry a message. Its geometric mass and density almost beyond human measure aptly invoke a world with many followers and but one leader, who in his own mind thought he was beyond human and nearly a god himself.

It's the architecture of human delusion, grandly evil in its assumption of the ruler's right to command the totality of social obedience.

Raise a man in monstrous buildings, and he becomes a monster. So it is with Pharaoh. By contrast, Moses, shorn of the grandeur of architecture that assails Heaven, glimpses man on the horizon and something above. He becomes more human: humbled, doubting, pathetic and, given his persistence in the face of those doubts, truly heroic. That's what "The Prince of Egypt" finally is: a hero's biography.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



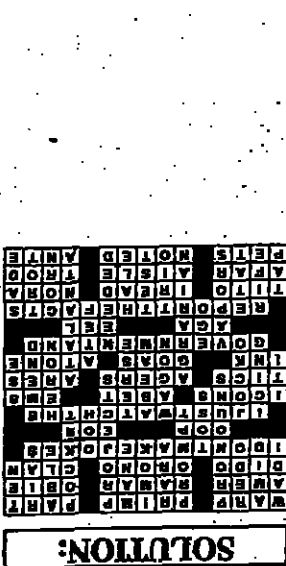
ACROSS
1 Distort
5 Gussy up
10 Go separate ways
14 Part of USA
15 of the jungle
16 Theater award
17 Frank
18 City in Maine
19 Tribal group
20 Start of a Will Rogers quote
22 Alley
24 Employment ad
25 More of 20A
32 Images
33 Assist
34 Printer's measures
36 Twiches

DOWN
3 Ripening factors
38 Water god
39 Sign
40 Tibetan gazelles
41 Mallet
42 More of 20A
43 Khan
47 Sea creature
48 End of quote
50 Jolly Boz
51 "All I know is just what's in the papers" (Will Rogers)
52 Author
53 Ephron
54 Out of range
56 Usher's domain
61 Walked on
62 Cossets
63 Famous measures
64 Poker stages

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OFF THE WALL

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-This Week's- HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Sagittarius and so are Pluto and Mercury. Pluto represents surprises, and Mercury represents communications. This ought to be interesting.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Your mood should be good, but your energy level is really intense. The moon in Scorpio empowers you, but in a rather irritating way.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Looks like you could have some pretty interesting conversations with your mate. These are good days for making decisions.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Looks like you want to play with a very interesting person, someone who is not only attractive, but also intelligent. But there's work to be done.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Save as much time as you can for love. You'll be in the mood for it, and so will the person you'd most like to spend time with.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Stick close to home. Looks like you'll have plenty to keep you busy there.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your house is the center of activity, which can get kind of frazzling. Might as well admit it, you wouldn't have it any other way.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). These days are about money, finding it, getting rid of it, sorting it, putting it into rows, figuring out your budget, paying your bills, balancing your checkbook, all that kind of thing.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). These are excellent days for figuring out money, where you're going to get it and how you're going to spend it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You know what needs to be done, so don't put it off any longer. Here's the good news. Once you get this done, you're going to be really, really pleased with yourself.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Home and family are important, but something even bigger is going on. Looks like you're bonding with your whole community again.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Watch your P's and Q's. You might as well. Looks like somebody else sure is, and that person has possibly got a promotion in mind.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Something you learn could benefit your career. The trouble is, it doesn't look like it at first.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: This year is about completion. You need to finish up everything you've ever started and left half done.

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Bridge

Hear the Cue
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable, North deals.

NORTH
♦ A K 7 3
♥ K Q
♠ J 10 2
♣ K Q 10 4

WEST
♦ J 9 5 2
♥ 6 4 3
♠ K 7
♣ J 9 5 3

SOUTH
♦ Q 10 8 6 4
♥ 7 5
♠ A 9 6 5
♣ 7 6

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♥	1♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♥

Bridge is not played in a vacuum. Consider just the trump suit in the North-South hands. If you are given no additional information and asked the correct way to tackle the suit, you would cash a high honor in the North hand so that, should West fail to follow, you would be able to take a finesse for East's jack. Yet the greatest

woman player of all time, Helen Sobel, ignored the normal line to land her contract.

South had as little as the law allows to accept North's game invitation. However, no one ever accused Helen of holding back in the auction, and the final contract of four spades allowed her to demonstrate her flair.

East won the opening heart lead with the ace and returned the suit to dummy's king. With East known to hold heart length, declarer decided that West, rather than East, rated to have length in spades, so at trick two declarer led a low spade from dummy! East's heart discard justified South's reasoning. Declarer won with the queen and continued with a low spade, forcing West to insert the nine.

Declarer won in dummy and ran the jack of diamonds to West's king. In an effort to weaken declarer's trump holding, West continued a third heart, ruffed with the eight in the closed hand as a club was discarded from the table. A club to the king was allowed to hold, and the club return was taken by West's nine. West could do no better than persevere with clubs. Declarer ruffed with the ten, finessed the seven of trumps, cashed the ace and repeated the diamond finesse for 10 tricks—four trumps, two ruffs, two diamonds and one each in hearts and clubs. Bravo!

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

AKDEB
ADURF
ENBODY
CUDISS

Answer here: THE

THE DRESS CODE

Answer impossible for a sloppy cryptographer to crack

Jumbles: BAKED FRAUD BEYOND DISCUS

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Words of Wisdom

You usually get from people exactly what you expect of them.

It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks of the job you're doing, as long as you're doing it to the best of your ability.

In times of crisis, he who hesitates may avoid a worse predicament.

Know where you are going, and everyone else will get out of your way.

Half of our lives are spent in learning prejudices that we spend the other half unlearning.

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Les tours géantes d'Ammon par Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

Une tradition biblique rapporte que les premiers habitants d'Ammon étaient des géants. Les futurs Ammonites, descendants de Lot d'après la tradition biblique, les auraient vaincus pour s'établir à leur place. Au regard des textes ougaritiques, ces personnages doivent plutôt être interprétés comme des héros ou des ancêtres déifiés par des croyances locales. Toutefois, cette légende n'est pas sans fondements. A l'évidence, les puissantes constructions aux blocs massifs que la tradition leur attribue. Il s'agit entre autres des tours ammonites, fortins de garde dispersés sur tout le territoire d'Ammon dont l'âge remonte à la royauté ammonite de l'Age du fer. Certaines de ces tours sont rondes, comme celles que l'on peut voir à proximité du Ministère des antiquités (Jebel Amman, troisième cercle). D'autres, quant à elles, sont carrées. Ce système de tours était destiné à maîtriser les voies d'accès au royaume. Ainsi, la visibilité d'une tour à l'autre formait une longue chaîne de surveillance, notamment sur le haut bord de la vallée du Jourdain. De façon à protéger le territoire d'une éventuelle menace venant de l'ouest, une ceinture entourant la capitale de près. Installées sur les crêtes surplombant les wadi, elles servaient également à protéger les installations agricoles contre les "razzias". On a en effet trouvé à maintes reprises des citernes à proximité des fondations de ces tours. Leur technique est rudimentaire, mais très résistante. Les murs, doublés, sont en pierre sèche et les blocs rectangulaires disposés de façon à constituer l'épaisseur du mur par leur longueur, n'offrant que leur petit côté à la face extérieure. (technique de boutisse). De ce fait les murs sont très épais. Cependant, en l'absence de fouilles systématiques, on ignore encore de quoi étaient faits l'aménagement intérieur, le mode d'accès et la couverture.



Éclaboussures

La diplomatie du fox-terrier

Dans le cadre du Festival du cinéma européen, je n'ai pu me résoudre à assister à la projection de la sélection britannique. Les frappes contre l'Irak, entamées la veille, incitent en effet à se demander ce qu'est l'Europe et surtout si le Royaume-Uni en a jamais fait partie. Alors que la France, entre autres, déplore l'engrenage ayant conduit aux bombardements, son supposé partenaire revendiquant haut et fort, on le sait, sa participation aux opérations - pour ne pas dire son statut de rouge. On a pu ainsi entendre le Secrétaire à la Défense saluer le courage de ses soldats : est-il pourtant aujourd'hui plus audacieux de survoler l'Irak à bord d'un Tornado que d'emprunter certaines lignes commerciales ? Une fois de plus, Londres a choisi son camp : la belliqueuse Pax Americana plutôt que l'Europe ou la légitimité onusienne, court-circuitée. A croire que le fox-terrier sans cesse écoule la voix de son maître. Albion ne parviendra-t-elle donc jamais à couper le cordon avec son fils prodige et prodigue (...en Tomahawks) ?

Quoi qu'il en soit, cette version londonienne de la servitude volontaire semble gonfler les espoirs d'une diplomatie autonome et équilibrée, conforme aux positions européennes, qu'avait fait naître il y a quelques mois la venue de Robin Cook dans la région. En réponse à Mme Albright qui s'est sentie obligée d'incriminer les pays ayant émis des réserves, on ne voit toujours pas à quoi servent ces frappes. Première certitude, celles-ci condamnent dans l'immédiat la nécessaire poursuite des inspections de l'UNSCOM. Si ces elles peuvent retarder une autre destitution, les opérations, de l'aveu même de leurs auteurs, ne devraient pas permettre de renverser le dictateur irakien ni favoriser les chances d'une opposition dénuée, sans crédit ni assise. Ne pourrions-nous pas trouver ailleurs l'instabilité des États arabes voisins censés être protégés et les souffrances d'une population prise entre le marteau américain et l'enclume Saddam. Pour un pays exsangue, la perspective d'une levée des sanctions s'éloigne un peu plus.

Mais ces considérations n'ont pas l'air de troubler outre mesure la patrie de l'Habemus Corpus, ancienne puissance tutélaire de l'Irak. En attendant, les fox-terriers aboient, les bombardiers passent et les civils trépassent. ■ G. W.

Vous voulez écrire en français ? Alors n'hésitez pas à collaborer à la rédaction du Jourdain. Que vous soyez passionné de politique, d'économie, de société, vos articles nous intéressent !

Stéphane Foucart
5664153

Des historiens israéliens revisitent l'Histoire officielle

L'Histoire officielle d'Israël ne reconnaît toujours pas les torts causés aux Palestiniens en 1948, lors de la création de l'Etat hébreu. Le fait que les expulsions de près d'un million d'individus aient été planifiées et orchestrées est toujours nié. Depuis le milieu des années 80, des "nouveaux historiens" israéliens ont le courage de remettre en cause les thèses officielles qui font toujours état d'un départ massif et volontaire des populations. Un "désastre" revisité.

« Nous voulons voir le nom d'Israël inscrit sur vos cartes ! Nous voulons que la légitimité de l'Etat d'Israël soit reconnue dans les livres d'écoles ! » En formulant cette requête, il y a deux semaines, aux responsables de l'Autorité palestinienne, le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu savait l'importance de faire entrer dans "l'histoire officielle"

d'un peuple, des faits, des événements qui peuvent servir une cause précise. Au contraire de ce qu'il demandait, il y a peu, aux responsables de l'Autorité palestinienne, l'historiographie traditionnelle - pour ne pas dire officielle - de l'Etat hébreu, ne reconnaît toujours pas les torts causés au peuple palestinien lors de la création d'Israël en 1948. Il est ainsi fréquent que nombre d'Israéliens soient persuadés que l'exode palestinien des territoires qui forment aujourd'hui l'Etat hébreu, n'a été qu'un "départ" de 300 000 à 500 000 individus, tous partis de leur plein gré, sans qu'aucune pression ne les y ait contraints. Les chiffres des Nations unies donnent, quant à eux, entre 700 000 et un million de réfugiés pour la seule année 1948.

Depuis la fin des années 80, des historiens israéliens se présentant comme "nouveaux historiens" mènent cependant des travaux de recherche, grâce à des archives désormais ouvertes, tendant à ébranler sérieusement les convictions de leur collègues "orthodoxes", tenants d'une histoire déjà écrite par les vainqueurs. Simha Flapan, Tom Segev, Ilan Pappé et Benny Morris se posent désormais en faiseurs de trouble de l'histoire traditionnelle juive. Mais les querelles de chiffres (500 000 ? 700 000 ? un million ?) ne constituent qu'une part du rétablissement de la vérité. Le problème majeur est en effet de savoir si les départs en masse de 1948 ont été clairement planifiés et orchestrés par les autorités israéliennes ou s'ils ont été, au contraire, préconisés ou même organisés par des dirigeants arabes qui, s'ils ont été victorieux, auraient promis aux populations concernées un retour rapide au pays. Dans son ouvrage *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem*, Benny Morris s'attache à relever, sur près de 370 localités arabes, les raisons du départ. Ses conclusions sont édifiantes. Selon l'historien israélien, dans 128 de ces localités, les habitants ont fui en masse en raison des assauts de troupes juives, et dans plus de quarante de ces cas, les expulsions ont été faites manu militari. Dans près de 100 autres villes ou villages, les départs ont été provoqués par les bruits de massacres perpétrés dans la région (lire le récit de Umm Ahmad en page de droite), comme celui de Deir Yassin par exemple, ou plus de 250 Palestiniens ont été abattus. Comme l'écrit Benny Morris, dans la préface à *1948 and after*, « la tendance des commandants militaires locaux à pousser les

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« Des atrocités, beaucoup plus répandues que les vieilles histoires ne le disaient, ont aussi contribué de manière significative à l'exode »

Benny Morris

Nakba

Les oranges de Haïfa

Leïla Khaled, membre du Front de libération de la Palestine :

« Avant de quitter la maison familiale, je m'empara de la boîte de lait en poudre de ma sœur, âgée d'à peine un mois. Je pleure, tout le monde pleure dans la voiture qui nous emmène vers le Liban. Nous partons sans rien emporter à part quelques affaires pour ma petite sœur, des couches pour bébé, probablement. Parfois, des gens affaiblis quittaient leur maison. Une fois arrivée à Tyr, dans la famille de ma mère, j'apprenais que ma mère me reprochait d'être partie sans rien. Je me suis sentie trahie. Ces oranges ne nous appartenaient pas, me dit-elle en colère, tu mangeras des oranges quand nous rentrerons chez nous à Haïfa ! » Depuis ce jour-là, je déteste les oranges, qui me rappellent trop ces moments d'exil. ■



Propos recueillis par Joséphine Lama et Christian Chesnot

Palestiniens à la fuite augmenta au fur et à mesure de la guerre. Des atrocités juives, poursuit-il, beaucoup plus répandues que les vieilles histoires ne le disaient (il y a eu des massacres d'Arabes à Ad-Dawayima, El-Laboun, Jish, Safsaf, Majd Al-Kurum, Salha et Sasa, en plus de Deir Yassin, Lydda et d'autres lieux) ont aussi contribué de manière significative à l'exode. Dans six cas seulement, la fuite a été recommandée par des autorités arabes. Alors, aucune injonction arabe incitant la population à la fuite ? Toujours selon Benny Morris, il n'existe aucune trace

d'une éventuelle volonté arabe, ni parmi les Etats ni parmi le Haut comité arabe palestinien, de voir les populations quitter leur terre. Selon lui, de nombreux fuyards étaient au contraire punis de leur acte. Pas la moindre trace écrite d'aucune publication en ce sens, même s'il est parfois arrivé que pour des raisons stratégiques, des villages soient évacués par les Arabes. Benny Morris estime ces cas comme représentant 5% des départs. D'ailleurs les appels radiodiffusés qui auraient été lancés en ce sens sont peu probables puisque la BBC, qui enregistrait tous les programmes, n'en retrouve pas trace. Mais ces "nouveaux historiens", et en particulier Benny Morris, vont plus loin. Ce dernier rapporte dans l'un de ses ouvrages (1948 and after), des passages du journal de Yosef Weitz, directeur du département foncier du Fonds national juif : « Il doit être clair qu'il n'y a pas de place pour deux peuples dans ce pays (...) et la seule solution, c'est la Terre d'Israël, ou au moins la partie occidentale de la Terre d'Israël, sans Arabes. Il n'y a pas de compromis possible sur ce point ! (...) Il n'y a pas d'autre moyen que de transférer les Arabes d'ici vers les pays voisins. (...) Pas un village ne doit rester, pas une tribu bedouine ». Et Benny Morris de s'attarder sur le cas de Yosef Weitz, qui obtiendra en avril 1948 la constitution et la direction du Comité du transfert, organisme supervisant officiellement les expulsions puis les destructions de villages ou leur remplacement par des familles juives.

Au dessus de Yosef Weitz, et sacrifiant sur l'historiographie traditionnelle juive, Ben Gourion est aussi dans la mire de Benny Morris. Mais, comme le note ce dernier, « Ben Gourion s'est toujours abstenu d'ordonner des expulsions claires et précises : il préférait que ses généraux "comprissent" ce qu'il souhaitait les voir faire. Il entendait être robaissé dans l'Histoire au rang de "grand expulsateur" ». Il reste qu'à cette époque c'est autour de sa personne que se concentre tout le pouvoir israélien et que rien n'arrive qu'il n'ait au préalable, d'une façon ou d'une autre, décidé. ■

Le Jourdain

A lire : Dominique Vidal, *Le péché originel d'Israël. L'expulsion des Palestiniens revisitée par les nouveaux historiens israéliens*. Editions de l'Atelier, 1998. Joséphine Lama & Christian Chesnot, *Palestiniens 1948-1998*, Editions Autrement, 1998.

Le Proche Orient sur la Toile

Intelligence avec le web

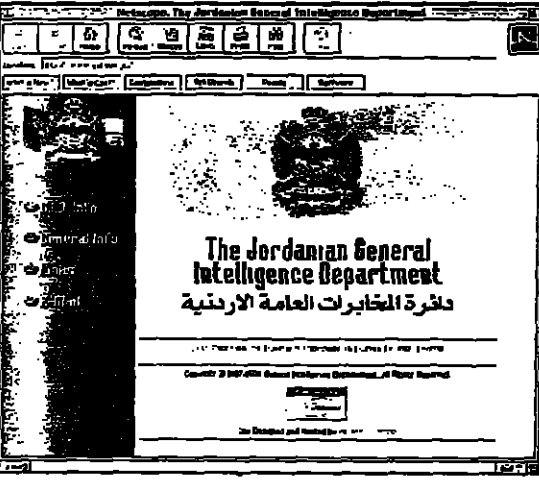
Les services secrets de tous pays ont, comme leur nom l'indique, vocation à rester discrets sur leurs activités. Mais discret ne veut pas dire invisible. Le Département général de l'Intelligence jordanien (General Intelligence Department - GID), plus couramment défini par le terme générique "Mukhabarat", possède donc lui aussi, comme nombre d'administrations moins "sensibles", un site internet (<http://www.gid.gov.jo>).

Mais les informations qui y sont dévoilées, on s'en doute, n'ont rien de particulièrement affolant. A l'inverse de certains sites du même type, la mise en ligne d'informations reste particulièrement frileuse.

Le site contient entre autre un petit « mot de bienvenue » du directeur Samih Bader El-Deen Butikhi, nommé par un « décret royal », dans lequel ce dernier définit son département comme « progressiste, souple, dynamique et vivement conscient de ses responsabilités et devoirs ». « Nous avons adopté une nouvelle politique d'ouverture, mais naturellement, prévient le directeur du GID, en raison de la nature de notre travail, il existe des restrictions sur les informations que nous mettons en ligne ». Donc, pas de grandes déceptions, l'internaute est prévenu.

Cependant une rubrique "terrorisme" attire l'œil. Mais là encore, pas de quoi être poursuivi pour rétention d'informations classées. Le GID se réjouit simplement dans cette rubrique « d'avoir participé à de nombreuses opérations de démantèlement d'opérations terroristes », sans préciser toutefois clairement lesquelles, où, qui, etc.

En réalité, le GID insiste bien plus sur l'aspect humaniste de sa mission, rapportant au visiteur, dans une rubrique « devoirs et responsabilités », que son travail consiste aussi à « collecter et analyser les informations qui pourraient aider le gouvernement à prendre certaines décisions politiques ». De même, insiste le GID, la mission des "mukhabarat" consiste



également à lutter contre « la corruption, le trafic d'armes et de drogues ». Toujours dans la veine humaniste le GID rappelle dans une rubrique « doctrine » que ses valeurs sont articulées autour « du respect des droits de l'homme, de la démocratie, du pluralisme politique ». Et, il faut l'avouer, les responsables du site jouent le jeu avec fair-play. Au sein du site, on peut trouver un bestiaire exhaustif des vingt partis politiques jordanien officiels, des mouvements nationalistes panarabes aux communistes, en passant par les deux formations islamistes.

De même, le site met en ligne un bref historique du Parlement jordanien, ainsi que des extraits de discours du roi Hussein, appelant tous à la démocratie, à la paix, à la modernisation.

Alors quel peut donc être l'intérêt d'une agence de renseignement à mettre en ligne ces quelques bribes d'informations ? Mystère. Mais l'internaute peut tout de même en tirer la conclusion que, outre le fait qu'aucune information d'importance n'est divulguée, les "mukhabarat" jordanien ont désormais une présence sur l'Internet et que par conséquent certains de ses cadres sont formés à la "cyber-guerre" de l'information dont on parle tant outre Atlantique. Une façon de montrer que l'on est à la page, en somme. ■

Le Jourdain

Une famille de réfugiés palestiniens : le résultat des démolitions d'habitations partiquées par les autorités palestiniennes. Le même but qu'il y a cinquante ans



Nakba

« L'année de la débâcle »

Georges Habache, secrétaire général du Front populaire de libération de la Palestine :

« Avant 1948, l'année de la débâcle, j'étudie la médecine à l'Université américaine de Beyrouth, où mes résultats universitaires sont brillants. Je suis un jeune homme heureux, j'aime danser et chanter. Je me prépare une belle carrière. Mon professeur de biochimie souhaite d'ailleurs que je me consacre à la recherche. Puis surviennent 1948 et la division de notre pays. Pour moi, l'indicible s'est produit. La première idée qui me traverse l'esprit est de retourner en Palestine. Mais pour faire quoi ? Je n'ai aucune formation militaire.

« L'université abrége les cours du dernier trimestre et supprime ceux du dernier mois. Je pars pour Lydda, où je suis né. L'armée jordanienne assure la protection de la ville et je m'attends à ce qu'elle soit engagée dans des combats pour la défendre. Mais des bombardements intenses nous forcent à évacuer Lydda. Cette sortie fait partie intégrante du plan sioniste. Les Israéliens ont affirmé que la population de Lydda était partie de son plein gré. C'est complètement faux. A l'Université américaine de Beyrouth, on nous enseignait les valeurs humanistes. Je découvre brutalement que ce ne sont que des paroles vaines... Et pourtant j'éprouve un respect sincère pour mes professeurs.

« Mais comment décrire l'horreur de l'exode de Lydda ? Existions-nous ou non ? Étions-nous en enfer ? Tous ces gens morts sur la route... Ces moments vont me marquer pour le restant de mes jours. Avant cela, je n'avais jamais pensé à la politique mais les événements de Lydda me propulsent définitivement dans cette voie : il faut libérer la Palestine, aidés par les Arabes. ■

Propos recueillis par Joséphine Lama et Christian Chesnot

Du neuf dans Le Jourdain

Vous avez aimé ou détesté un article ou un dossier ? Envoyez vos réactions par mail à : le-jourdain@eudoraimail.com Une rubrique "Courrier des lecteurs" devrait ainsi voir le jour dans nos colonnes.

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adzasi

Asian Games Notebook

Israel considers return to Asian Games in 2002

BANGKOK—Excluded from the Asian Games for political reasons, Israel may return to the continental sporting fraternity at the next games in South Korea. A games press release said a special invitation was being considered for Israel, which was excluded before the 1978 games under pressure from participating Middle Eastern countries. In its last games appearance, at Tehran in 1974, Israel won seven gold medals and finished sixth in the medals race. Iraq is also banned from participation, an action which was taken following its invasion of Kuwait in the 1990 Gulf War. The 2002 games will be staged in Pusan, South Korea's second-largest city and major port. It is expected to attract 17,000 athletes, officials and media representatives, with competition set in 32 sports. The theme of the 2002 games will be "Asia is One," and the mascot a sea gull displaying "dynamic power, purity and valiant spirit."

Records galore

Eleven world and 48 continental records have been broken so far at the Asian Games, and more countries are on the medals chart than at the last games, officials say. Weightlifting accounted for all the new world marks, with China breaking 10 and South Korea one.

Records in weightlifting have been dropping like flies following a decision by the sport's ruling body to wipe all records prior to 1998 off the books. The reason: too much doping in the sport tainted previous records. Of the 41 participating countries in Bangkok, 32 have been able to win medals while only 22 shared the medals at the last games four years ago in Hiroshima, Japan.

Still noticeably missing from the medals chart are Yemen, Bhutan and the Maldives, which have never won medals at any games.

"The best way to promote sport in Asia is to allow nations to win medals at the Asian Games," says Wei Jizhong, a senior official of the Olympic Council of Asia. "When a sport developing country brings home a medal, its people will be happy, and the government will put more money into sport."

Ito voted star of Asian Games

BANGKOK—Japanese sprinter Koji Ito was Sunday declared the top competitor of the 13th Asian Games, where he earned \$100,000 on top of his three gold medals.

The 28-year-old was the star of the track and field contest, winning the men's 100 meter and 200m title and getting his third gold in the 4x100m relay.

He clocked an Asian record of 10.00 seconds in the 100m heats, agonizingly close to becoming Asia's first sub-10-second runner. Journalists and officials at the Games gave Ito 481 votes out of around 1,500 votes cast. The top prize was \$100,000.

Kuwaiti weightlifter tests positive for doping

A Kuwaiti has become the second weightlifter to test positive for banned drugs at the Asian Games, officials declared.

"Jaber Al-Ajmi has been disqualified after testing positive for nandrolone, a banned anabolic steroid," the Olympic Council of Asia said in a statement.

"I hope we don't have any more in the future," said OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah, who is also a Kuwaiti.

"I am very happy that there have been only two cases, which aren't that important, and they don't not involve champions," he added.

At the last games in Hiroshima, Japan said that they had 11 cases of 11 medals, and they had to change all the results.

The Chinese were the main culprits in 1994. This time, Chinese officials assured that extensive tests were carried out before the games to make sure that the athletes were clean.

"In 1994, 15 athletes out of 700 tested were found to have used banned substances," said Dr. Rueangsak Siriphol, chairman of the games' medical control subcommittee.

Al-Ajmi was tested at random, December 14, after finishing 10th in the over 105-kilogram division. He came 10th with a total lift of 270 kilograms, well behind the 427.5 winner Kim Tae-hyun of South Korea. Both samples from his urine test were found positive for nandrolone, the council said.

It is said that Al-Ajmi was subjected to sanctions which were set by the International Weightlifting Federation.

Earlier, Jordanian weightlifter Ayed Khashaladeh tested positive for the banned substance triamterene, the council announced. Triamterene is a diuretic, used for losing weight, allowing a competitor to compete in lower weight categories. Diuretics can also be used to mask the use of other drugs.

The sheikh said weightlifters still need more education against doping. "I hope the international federation will take serious action," he said. "This is the second case with weightlifters. They must try to solve the problem. Otherwise, it will be very bad for them," he added.

On Wednesday, Dr. Rueangsak said that about 800 athletes would have been tested by the end of the competition on Sunday. More than 6,000 athletes from 41 countries are competing in 36 sports.

Several athletes were thrown off their national teams before the games began as a result of advanced tests. Those which were announced publicly included four South Korean gymnasts, a South Korean swimmer and a Japanese billiards player.

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BANGKOK 98

Bangkok's fabulous 15 days hailed worldwide

BANGKOK (Reuters)—The 13th Asian Games wrapped up in Bangkok last night, with host Thailand the big winner after beating a crippling economic crisis to stage a highly-praised event that was the last great sports event in Asia this century.

Marathon runner Lee Bong-ju of South Korea, won the final gold medal when he overcame Bangkok's sweltering heat to surge home in style.

The last act took place when Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, standing in for King Bhumibol Adulyadej, formally closed an event that featured 6,554 athletes from 41 countries or territories competing in 36 medal sports.

The next Games will be in the South Korean port of Pusan in 2002.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, President of the Olympic Council of Asia, hailed the Games as "15 days of joy, friendship, harmony and fair play."

The success of the Games in the face of early predictions of organizational chaos has been a major morale boost to Thailand amid its worst economic crisis in decades.

Almost as soon they began on December 6th, the 13th Asian Games shed their "unlucky" 13th tag and quickly became known as the "Happy" Games, an event largely free of serious controversy which lived up to its slogan of "friendship beyond frontiers."

China continued their unbroken reign since 1982 as the Asian sports champion, collecting 129 gold medals, eight short of their haul at the last Games in 1994 in Hiroshima and far from the 183 record they won at the 1990 Beijing Games.

South Korea came second with 65 golds and Japan third with 52. Thailand came a creditable fourth with its best-ever Games haul of 24 golds, compared with a dismal three in Hiroshima.



Iran dominates Kuwait for Asian Games soccer gold; China takes bronze

BANGKOK, Thailand—being down to 10 men, Iran dominated Gulf rival Kuwait 2-0, to capture the Asian Games gold medal for soccer Saturday, while China easily outpaced host Thailand in a consolation match for the bronze.

A pair of first-half goals by Ahmed Karimi and World Cup veteran Karim Bagheri put the match out of reach for the struggling Kuwaitis, who missed star striker Jasssem al-Huwaidi, who was out from the semifinal against Thailand with a badly strained thigh.

It was the second Asian Games title for Iran, which beat North Korea for the gold in 1990.

The Iranians, who are always the favorites for a gold, outplayed the Kuwaitis on every level in the first half. Midfielder Karimi shined for Iran, scoring on a high, close header in the 4th minute from a corner kick and showing flair in carving up the Kuwaiti offense.

Kuwaiti striker Farj Laheeb, who reached the finals with nine goals, one more than al-Huwaidi, seldom threatened in the first half as the Iranians never allowed the Kuwaiti attack to gel. But the Kuwaitis also managed to shut down Bayern Munich star Ali Daei, Iran's top games scorer with eight.

Bagheri, another key prop in the Iranian side missing the injured Mohammad Khakpour, struck his third goal of the games in the 29th minute, skirting the last layer of Kuwaiti defense and firing a tight shot from the edge of the goal area inside the far post.

In the second half, the Iranians largely sat on their lead and allowed Kuwait to regroup and set up a series of free



kicks and corners. Laheeb and Bader al-Halabeji threatened the goal without any scores.

In the 33rd minute, Iran was reduced to 10 men when defender Mehdi Mahdavi was sent off after a high-boot interception that brought down Kuwait's Muhammad Ben Haji. But Iran held off a relentless series of Kuwaiti attacks to maintain the shutout.

"I'm very happy for the Iranian team," said a jubilant Daei before mounting the podium for the gold medal. "The Iranian team is the best in Asia," he added. A dejected al-Huwaidi said that a five day rest wasn't enough to overcome his injury and that

"it was painful to sit on the sidelines and watch my team lose."

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, head of the Kuwaiti soccer federation and the Olympic Council of Asia, said his players were intimidated against the Iranians in the first half and made mistakes, but found their footing again in the last 45 minutes.

"I'm happy for the Iranians; they deserved it," the sheikh said. "The Kuwaitis are newcomers, and we are missing nine of our players. They have done very well."

Iran brought a side-packed with World Cup veterans. Their experience showed throughout the three-week soccer competition among 23 original

teams. Tiny Oman upset the Iranians in the second round, but Iran otherwise dominated its matches.

Japan and South Korea, which also went to France and as the Iranians did poorly, left most of their World Cup veterans at home in favor of bringing up younger players in preparation for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

In the battle for bronze, China dashed Thailand's hopes of capturing its first-ever soccer medal in the regional Olympic-style sportsfest.

Crystal Palace star Fan Zhiyi opened the scoring in the 25th minute before a capacity crowd of 20,000 screaming, flag-waving Thais in the southern city of Songkhla, slotting a free kick through a break in the Thai defensive wall for the only score in the first half. Substitute Wang Peng added the insurance 21 minutes into the second half, taking a 12-meter shot that caromed off the keeper into the back of the net. Ma Mingyu, later, came down the right side and fired 20 meter kick at a tight angle for the final 3-0 score.

The goals were the third each in the Games for Ma and Wang, and the second for Fan.

The Thais were a laggard shadow of the side that upset heavily favored South Korea in Monday's quarterfinal. Under English coach Peter Witte, they were hoping to advance, but China's superior depth kept them at bay.

For China also, the result was a disappointing decline from its silver at the last Asian Games in Hiroshima, four years ago. The young Chinese squad lost twice to Iran in the tournament, once in a preliminary group and again in Wednesday's semifinal.

Football Roundup

English Premier League

Chelsea finds first place; Man U loses at home to Boro

LONDON—Chelsea soared to the top of the Premier League for the first time in nine years after a 2-0 victory over Tottenham while Manchester United slumped 3-2 at home to Middlesbrough.

Uruguay star Gustavo Poyet and Norwegian striker Tore Andre fired the goals at Stamford Bridge as Gianluca Vialli's team, which scored a 1-1 tie at Manchester United on Wednesday, came up with an even better result against Spurs.

Chelsea took advantage of the fact that leader Aston Villa is not in action until it goes to Charlton on Monday and went above Villa on goal difference with both teams on 33 points.

United fell 3-0 down at home to Middlesbrough which won at Old Trafford for the first time since January 1930.

A Boro team managed by former Reds star Bryan Robson raced into a three-goal lead through Colombian striker Hamilton Ricard, Dean Gordon and Brian Deane before Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes replied.

The loss means that Manchester United still hasn't won in five games since Brian Kidd quit as assistant manager to move to Blackburn.

Middlesbrough, promoted last season, moved up one to fourth place and is only three points off the lead and a point behind United.

West Ham moved up to sixth by scoring a 2-1 victory over Everton. French mid-fielder Marc Keller scored with a floating cross from the right and Trevor Sinclair netted with a diving header. Danny Cadamatri replied for Everton.

Liverpool's worst run for 44 years ended with a 3-0 victory over Sheffield Wednesday at Anfield with goals from Czech forward Patrik Berger and Michael Owen, his 13th of the season. The victory moved Liverpool up three



places to ninth.

Southampton climbed off last place with a 3-1 victory over Wimbledon at the Dell, where Norwegian forward Egil Ostenstad scored twice and Hassan Kachibou, a Moroccan on trial at the club, added the other.

The victory means that Nottingham Forest slipped to last after conceding an equalizer in the third minute of injury time at home to Blackburn. Rovers' Nathan Blake scored his second of the game after Steve Chadley and Donnie Freedman had given Forest a 2-0 lead. Blackburn is second from last, with two points more than Forest.

Coventry squandered a first half

lead and was held 1-1 at home by Derby and is only four points off last place, third from last.

Instead of fielding its 22 million pound strike force of Alan Shearer and Duncan Ferguson, Newcastle didn't have either on the starting lineup in the 1-0 victory over Leicester at St James Park. Ferguson was sidelined through injury and Shearer, who has missed six games with hamstring trouble, made a second-half appearance as a substitute although it was Scottish mid-fielder Stephen Glass who scored the winner.

Sunderland increased its lead atop division one to 11 points after a 0-0 tie at Birmingham. Second place Ipswich is in action Sunday against Sheffield United.

Bundesliga
Bayern Munich whips Wolfsburg, rolls into break

BERLIN—Bayern Munich capped a big week Saturday, rolling to its third rout and proving once again the team is in a league of its own in the Bundesliga.

Munich blasted VfL Wolfsburg 3-0, polishing off six remarkable days in which the side jumped from second in the table to eighth place as the league breaks for the winter.

Along the way, the Bavarians ended up with a league record for the break of 14-2-2. Munich crushed Bayer Leverkusen, which led the table on goal differential in a lopsided 3-0 affair Sunday. On Tuesday, the team strolled past Moenchengladbach 2-0. But its only real hope of a upset day

have been wasted 24 seconds into the match when striker Roy Prager stunned Munich by popping up unattended in front of the goal.

Munich's non-stop attack was rewarded in the 40th minute when French mid-fielder Lizarazu sent a perfect cross flying into striker Carsten Jancker. The big striker outleaped three defenders to head in the first goal. Elber's header in the 86th was his 11th goal, matching the league high. Bosnia's Hassan Salihovic then converted a penalty just before the whistle to cap the scoring.

Leverkusen, still reeling from being humiliated by Munich, struggled to a 1-1 draw against Hansa Rostock despite playing against 10 men in the second half. Kaiserslautern and 1860 Munich, third against fourth place, also played to 1-1.

Hamburg SV also beat Nuremberg 2-0 and Frankfurt and Duisburg played a 0-0 draw. Dortmund overpowered Stuttgart 3-0 and Freiburg and Bochum played to 1-1.

Hansa's German national team player Oliver Neuville connected for the equalizer against Leverkusen in the 72nd minute, 10 minutes after a team-mate was sent packing for a foul. Defender Zivkovic had shot Leverkusen, which had two frustrated players thrown out in the final minutes, into the lead in the 29th minute.

Bernhard Winkler's 51st minute goal put visiting 1860 up against Kaiserslautern, but Marco Reich leveled nine minutes later.

Visiting 1860 dominated the first half against sluggish Kaiserslautern in front of 41,500 fans. "Playing good isn't enough," we should have used our chances," said 1860 coach Werner Lorant at the half.

Schalke is back on the winning side since long-injured Marc Wilmanns has returned to the lineup.

This time the Belgian international, connected on a sharply angled game winner in the 77th minute.

New Gulf conflict casts shadow over games village

BANGKOK (Agencies)—Kuwaiti athletes at the Asian Games expressed fears that Iraq may attack their country following US and British air strikes, while Pakistani and Indian athletes, threw their support behind the Iraqi leader Kuwaiti water polo players Nawaf Al Otaibi and Ali Al Enazi said the United States and Britain had been right to bomb suspected Iraqi weapons targets. "We don't want Iraqis to invade us again," said Ali Otaibi.

Ali Enazi added: "It's not the people in Iraq who are the problem. It is Saddam Hussein. Somebody should get rid of him."

One Iranian official, who declined to be named, said the events should not be allowed to overshadow the 41-nation Games which end

Sunday. "This is sport, it has nothing to do with what's happening in Iraq," he said.

Omani 400 metres relay runner Mansour Al Anbari said: "It's not good that this should happen. It's not the Iraqi people's fault. They are forced to do what Saddam says."

However, a Pakistani and an Indian athlete, threw their support behind the Iraqi leader. "America is no good," said Pakistani wrestler Muhammad Anwar. "Saddam Hussein is a good leader. America is just causing problems. They want to control the world."

Indian wrestler Kirpa Patel, standing next to Anwar, said: "America is the problem, not Iraq. India and Pakistan have a few problems, but we are friends. Americans are not friends."



Qatari Suleiman the champion of 5000 m race

THE STAR'S

WORK
COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

A look back at the news that made headlines and defined the face of 1998:

Top computer stories of 98

THE YEAR 1998 was an active year for computing and information technology, both internationally and regionally.

The computer press worldwide has been featuring the highlights of the year, and most agree on the top stories. For the readers of the Star, we have put together somewhat of a look back at the year, based on the input of the international press. Next week, we deliver the top events and stories in Jordan and the region.

Year 2000 problem
This is the story that made the most headlines. The Year 2000 problem, referred to as Y2K, made headlines and received attention worldwide and is now, supposedly, on its way to being solved. However, with one year to go, it still seems that damages may be extensive. The bottom line is that hundreds of millions of dollars have already been spent on Y2K compliance.

Microsoft's legal battles
This is the longest running story of the year, and most people are already sick of hearing about it. Basically, the whole issue is with regard to Microsoft's anti-trust practices, by which it deals ruthlessly with its competitors, locking out Netscape browsers, through its control over the Windows operating system. Undoubtedly, Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft, has been the most featured man in business news worldwide!

The year of e-commerce
The Internet spread like wild fire, with over 150 million users towards the end of the year; e-commerce took off with it as shopping, banking and even

financial fraud on line grew enormously. Expected to hit \$1.3 trillion worldwide within the next decade, e-commerce is where the global marketplace is heading!

Merging powers
Major companies have been on a 'buying spree', especially in the Internet industry. America Online bought ICQ, then



went on to buy Netscape for \$4.2 billion. Microsoft bought Hotmail and many more deals were in the press. It seemed, every day that there was either a buyout or a rumor of one!

New, deadly bugs and viruses
Newer and even more vicious bugs emerged—one of them could overwrite the basic boot-up BIOS code on Intel-compatible computers. The bug claimed 500 computers at one company, 700 at another.

Battling the 'over-clocking' trend in processors
Intel took its battle public to stop the practice of over-clocking, whereby a processor is set to run at a higher frequency than originally specified. Suppliers and end-users were misled by processors that indi-

Computer & IT companies:

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. email us at Star@NETS.com.jo or start @ go.com.jo with your news and views

caused 200MHz clock speed, when they were actually 100MHz processors. Oh dear!

The rise of Apple, again!
Thanks to the iMac, Apple is back with a swing reporting profits and expansion plans under CEO Steve Jobs. The iMac is the best selling computer in the USA. Apple is finally making a comeback. Great news for Mac fans, but how long can Apple keep it up?

Software glitches abound
Windows 95 had problems, shortly after release, as did the new version of Windows NT—and those are operating systems, imagine what a rough year users had with their applications!

Cheap PCs, prices slashed
Breaking the unbelievably low \$700 mark for a well specified Pentium II, suppliers are finally taking computers to the masses. Into the coming months, this trend will continue and expand to cover all other items of hardware, ensuring that computer freaks will have a Happy New Year 1999.

Arab OnLine announces 'Arabia Ramadan'
ARAB OnLine has announced the launch of its site 'Arabia Ramadan', available in English and Arabic. Arab OnLine is the first and only Islamic design, visitors will be able to explore the significance of selected Muslim cities, and get to know some of Islam's most important figures. Visitors can also find Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). Arabia OnLine has included a collection of special Ramadan greeting cards which can be sent free of charge to friends and family. The site will also feature a special Ramadan Competition Quiz, which will be updated regularly to include wishes from various Islamic countries. The Arabia OnLine site can be accessed at www.arabonline.com.

AT&T buys IBM's network computing business for \$5 billion

AT&T AND IBM announced a series of strategic agreements under which AT&T will acquire IBM's Global Network business for \$5 billion in cash, and the two companies will enter into out-sourcing contracts with each other. IBM will out source a significant portion of its global networking needs to AT&T. AT&T, on the other hand, will out source certain applications processing and data center management operations to IBM.

The transactions could represent \$2.5 billion in additional revenue to AT&T in the first full year of operation. The IBM Global Network business AT&T will acquire the networking needs of several hundred large global companies,

thousands of mid-sized businesses and more than 1 million individual Internet users in 59 countries. The acquisition boosts AT&T's strategy to rapidly increase the company's revenue, especially at its fast-growing networking services unit. About 5,000 IBM employees will join AT&T as part of the acquisition.

The acquisition of IBM's global data network will accelerate our ability to deliver IP-based services to global customers. It will also enhance AT&T's sophisticated new platform for revenue growth. By providing customers with more attractive global services, the acquisition will enable AT&T to compete more effectively with strong

rivals for the provisioning of global managed data network services, including IP. As part of the agreement, IBM will manage AT&T's lease applications processing, including billing, service-order processing, installation and maintenance for customers of AT&T business long-distance services.

In addition, IBM will assume management of AT&T's data processing centers, which operates corporate information systems such as accounts payable and receivable, and employee payroll and benefits.

Under the agreement, more than 2,000 AT&T management employees will be offered positions with IBM.

New 'Smart Virus' attacks PCs

A DANGEROUS computer virus has emerged. It is a self-replicating Windows NT virus. It recently attacked MCI WorldCom, taking down its servers and scrambling data last week.

It attacks Windows NT-based networks and propagates over the network. It could be a virus designed specifically for acts of sabotage. The way this virus works is as follows. It compresses the executable files of

servers and workstations that it encounters, rendering them unusable. It also encrypts .DOC or .XLS files with a cipher that researchers still have not identified, making it impossible to gain access to those files. The virus itself, which is written in C and also partly encrypted, is a savvy piece of programming. It logs itself in through domain administrative controls and then copies itself over the network.

attacking other servers and even workstations that access those servers. It can use any link that can identify NT resources. It is also huge by virus standards at 120KB. It operates on a timing mechanism so that it propagated faster between 3 pm and 6 am—hours when network administration staffing is typically lower. A detection software for this virus may already be available, but the worrying issue is that such viruses, set loose suddenly can cause all sorts of damage before being controlled.

News update

Portable iMac, soon
Apple Computer Inc. is to introduce a low-cost, laptop version of its hot-selling iMac consumer computer. Apple's anticipated portable device will be called the WebMate and will be made of translucent plastic, much like Apple's popular new iMac desktop computer. It will

include a 300 megahertz PowerPC processor. The WebMate will also have a built-in Internet network connection and a universal capability to connect with external devices such as printers. This is part of Apple's plans to streamline its once-unwieldy product line into four main categories and get back into the consumer business.

space has already been booked. A number of leading companies have confirmed their participation at Gitex Cairo including Sun Microsystems, Oracle, Novell, Imation ME, Compuware, MARC AM, CHS Aptec and Acer. The event has also received confirmed participation from many of the leading Egyptian companies. Gitex Cairo is open exclusively to trade and specialist visitors and will be organized concurrently with 'Computer Shopper Cairo', dedicated to retail sales targeting small companies and individuals.

Gitex Cairo will be held at the Cairo International Conference Centre between 2-5 April 1999.

More than half of GITEX Cairo space booked

Gitex Cairo, the international debut of the Middle East's premier IT show, has received overwhelming support from exhibitors currently at Gitex Dubai. Out of the 6000 and 3000 square meter space available for Gitex, Cairo and 'Computer Shopper Cairo' respectively, more than 50 per cent of the hall

space has already been booked. A number of leading companies have confirmed their participation at Gitex Cairo including Sun Microsystems, Oracle, Novell, Imation ME, Compuware, MARC AM, CHS Aptec and Acer. The event has also received confirmed participation from many of the leading Egyptian companies. Gitex Cairo is open exclusively to trade and specialist visitors and will be organized concurrently with 'Computer Shopper Cairo', dedicated to retail sales targeting small companies and individuals.

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INTERFACE
BY ZEID NASSER**Three quarters of a million Arabs online**

THE LATEST studies show that the number of users on the Internet worldwide has broken the 150 million mark!

This is a phenomenal number and resembles a massive increase of 30 million in less than six months!

In May this year, a study showed the number of users on the 'net' to be around 120 million, so the growth is amazing and it provides a sign of things to come.

What's more, online business transactions are growing enormously and the Internet has established itself as the next marketplace.

So, with all this growth internationally, it's worth taking a look at the number of users in the Middle East—the Arab countries in Asia and North Africa.

According to a study published by Dabbagh Information Technology Group (DIT), the number of Internet users in the region is around 7,280,000 users; with the possibility of exponential growth taking place in the coming months.

So, the Arabs online—or rather the Arabs online inside the Arab world—haven't hit a million yet, but they should within six months, especially once Saudi Arabia gets online. In Saudi Arabia, a country with a population of 14 million, you can expect that at least 40,000 users should go online. Here it is important to differentiate between the number of Internet accounts and the number of Internet users, simply because more than one user may access the same account. For example, in Jordan, there are some 10,000 active Internet accounts.

However, it is estimated that over 25,000 people in Jordan access the Internet regularly. Of course, owing to the wide-spread trend of Internet access centers—mainly Internet cafes—the Internet is gaining 'popularity'. What's more, Internet server solutions in organizations enable tens, if not hundreds of employees, to access the Internet at work from within the company's account!

Simply, anybody and everybody who has computer knowledge or access to a computer is or will be on the Internet!

Locally, the picture looks quite encouraging. Relative to Jordan's population, the level of Internet penetration in the country is among the highest in the region!

Getting back to the Middle East picture, it is expected that users may start to perform transactions online—such as online shopping or banking—as credit card companies in the region and banks begin to authorize these activities. 1999 is set to be yet another year of widespread Internet use worldwide and in the Middle East. With the continuous drop in hardware prices, stimulating more PC sales, and with the advent of Internet access centers such as cafes and libraries we should be seeing thousands more users from Jordan hopping onto the 'net'. With the advent of the millennium, the information age will look like much more of a reality, and so will the global village. Hopefully, you will be able to share this world with over 1 million Arab users, playing their role as part of the 200 million strong on-line community, and seeking to increase their relative number of 'electronic population'.

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Some health guidelines for Ramadan

THIS ARTICLE provides useful advice on how to avoid some common problems encountered in Ramadan. If followed, it would enable one to fast comfortably and enjoy fully the spiritual benefits of Ramadan.

During the holy month of Ramadan, our diet should not differ very much from our normal one, and should be as simple as possible. The diet should be such that we maintain our normal weight, neither losing nor gaining. However, if one is overweight, Ramadan is an ideal time to normalize one's weight.

In view of the long hours of fasting, we should consume slow digesting foods including fibre-containing foods rather than fast-digesting foods. Slow digesting foods last up to 8 hours, while fast-digesting foods last for only 3 to 4 hours.

■ **Slow-digesting foods** are foods that contain grains and seeds like barley, wheat, oats, millet, semolina, beans, lentils, whole meal flour, unpolished rice, etc. (called complex carbohydrates).

■ **Fast-digesting foods** are foods that contain sugar, white flour, etc. (called refined carbohydrates).

■ **Fibre-containing foods** are bran-containing foods, whole wheat, grains and seeds, vegetables like green beans, peas, marrow, mealies, spinach, and other herbs like methie, the leaves of beetroots (iron-rich), fruit with skin, dried fruit especially dried apricots, figs and prunes, almonds, etc.

The foods eaten should be well-balanced, containing elements from each food group, i.e. fruits, vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, bread/cereals and dairy products. Fried foods are unhealthy and should be limited. They cause indigestion, heart-burn, and weight problems.

Avoid

■ **Fried and fatty foods.**
 ■ **Foods containing too much sugar.**
 ■ **Over-eating especially at Sohoor.**
 ■ **Too much tea at Sohoor.** Tea makes you pass more urine taking with it valuable mineral salts that your body would need during the day.
 ■ **Smoking cigarettes.** If you cannot give up smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadan. Smoking is unhealthy and one should stop completely.

EAT

■ **Complex carbohydrates** at Sohoor so that the food lasts longer making you less hungry.
 ■ **Haleem** is an excellent source of protein and is a slow-burning food.
 ■ **Dates** are an excellent source of sugar, fibre, carbohydrates, potassium and magnesium.
 ■ **Almonds** are rich in protein and fibre, with less fat.
 ■ **Bananas** are a good source of potassium, magnesium and carbohydrates.

Drink

■ **As much water or fruit juices** as possible between Ifar and bedtime so that your body may adjust fluid levels in time.
 Constipation can cause piles (haemorrhoids), fissures (painful cracks in anal canal) and indigestion with a bloated feeling.
 Causes: Too much refined foods, too little water and not enough fibre in the diet.
 Remedy: Avoid excessive refined foods, increase water intake, use bran in baking, brown flour when making roti.

Indigestion And Wind

Causes: Over-eating. Too much fried and fatty foods, spicy foods, and foods that produce wind eg: eggs, cabbage, lentils, and carbonated drinks, like Cola, also produce gas.
 Remedy: Do not over-eat, drink fruit juices or better drink water. Avoid fried foods, add ajinomoto to wind-producing foods.

Lethargy

(low blood pressure) Excessive sweating, weakness, tiredness, lack of energy, dizziness, especially on getting up from a sitting position, pale appearance and feeling faint are symptoms associated with "low blood pressure". This tends to occur towards the afternoon.

Causes: Too little fluid intake, decreased salt intake.

Remedy: Keep cool, increase fluid and salt intake.

Caution: Low blood pressure should be confirmed by taking a blood pressure reading when symptoms are present. Persons with high blood pressure may need their medication adjusted during Ramadan. They should consult their doctors.

Headache

Causes: Caffeine and tobacco-withdrawal, doing too much in one day, lack of sleep, and hunger usually occur as the day goes by and worsens at the end of the day. When associated with "low blood pressure", the headache can be quite severe and can also cause nausea before Ifar.

Remedy: Cut down caffeine and tobacco slowly starting a week or two before Ramadan. Herbal and caffeine-free teas may be substituted. Reorganize your schedule during Ramadan so as to have adequate sleep.

Low Blood Sugar

Weakness, dizziness, tiredness, poor concentration, perspiring easily, feeling shaky (tremor), unable to perform physical activities, headache, and palpitations are symptoms of low blood sugar.

Causes in non-diabetics: Having too much sugar i.e. refined carbohydrates especially at Sohoor. The body produces too much insulin causing the blood glucose to drop.

Remedy: Eat something at Sohoor and limit sugar-containing foods and drinks.

Caution: Diabetics may need to adjust their medication in Ramadan, consult your doctor.

Muscle Cramps Causes: Inadequate intake of calcium, magnesium and potassium foods.

Remedy: Eat rich foods in the above minerals eg: vegetables, fruit, dairy products, meat and dates.

Caution: Those on high blood pressure medication and with kidney stone problems should consult their doctor.

Peptic Ulcers, Heart Burn, Gastritis And Hiatus Hernia

Increased acid levels in the empty stomach in Ramadan aggravate the above conditions. It presents as a burning feeling in the stomach area under the ribs and can extend up to the throat. Spicy foods, coffee, and Cola drinks worsen these conditions.

Medications are available to control acid levels in the stomach. People with proven peptic ulcers and hiatus hernia should consult their doctor well before Ramadan.

Kidney Stones

Kidney stones may occur in people who have less liquids to drink. Therefore, it is essential to drink extra liquids so as to prevent stone formation.

Joint Pains

Causes: During Ramadan, when extra Salah (prayers) are performed the pressure on the knee joints increases. In the elderly and those with arthritis this may result in pain, stiffness, swelling and discomfort.

Remedy: Lose weight so that the knees do not have to carry any extra load. Exercise the lower limbs before Ramadan so that they can be prepared for the additional strain. Being physically fit allows greater fulfilment, thus enabling one to be able to perform Salah with ease and comfort.

Dr Farouk Haffjee, Islamic Medical Association

Wonders of dates

By Star Staff Writer

MOST MUSLIMS break their fasting everyday by eating a number of dates. This has become traditional not only for people across the Arab nation, but in the Muslim world as well. It has become the norm practiced by many Muslim households to eat few dates, or sip just a little water, then go for the evening prayers. It is suggested that this process actually relaxes the muscles of the stomach, and prepares it for the full feast that is to follow.

Over the centuries, and certainly since the birth of Prophet Mohammad, dates have become part of the diet and culture of the Muslim world. But, dates have a much deeper meaning for Muslims, since its religious and spiritual value was signified by the holy Koran. The word date, for instance, was uttered 20 times in 16 Sura.

And this is basically because of the healthy and nutritional values of the date. Back at the time of Prophet Mohammad, and since then, the date has served the people of the area—Arabian peninsula and its surrounding regions—well. This is because of the harsh terrain and environment which Arabs had to endure.

Prophet Mohammad knew the deep healing effects of dates, which have grown rich in abundance in various parts of the Arab world.

These healing aspects were proved to be correct by present medical research. The Prophet used to say eating dates for the mother would protect her and the fetus during pregnancy. Dates also help the mother and the baby in the post-natal period.

Further to this, it has been proven that dates actually help to stop the hemorrhage of women, and controls blood pressure during pregnancy. And in the old days, it was believed that eating dates would help to make the liver stronger, and safeguard against sore throat. It was thought that those who don't eat dates would suffer from tooth aches and headaches.

But there is much more. A date is not only a fruit, but it can serve as a meal, a drink and as a desert. Medical experts today agree also that eating dates helps to strengthen your gums, stomach, stops diarrhoea and bleeding hemorrhoids. Every 100 grams of seedless dates contain calcium, phosphate, and iron. Medical experts argue that these mineral elements would help you from getting heartburns. This is



because dates have both vitamin A, B and lots of proteins, which are essential to the body.

For a long time, people of the Arabian peninsula ate dates with milk and yoghurt. This had been the traditional diet for Arabs who lived in Mecca, Madina, Yemen, Baghdad, Damascus

and presently Amman.

Today, dates are no longer eaten like they were in the old days. They are still traditional and part of our region and culture, but as society developed, they have become marginal, side-plate if you like, of main dishes on our table. But this is really sad, because the

richness of the date may have become under-estimated. Dates for instance are still some of the best natural medicines to increase the muscles, and the nerves, and to keep people looking young. All we can say now is keep eating dates. They do not only taste good but are also excellent for your health.

The Crescent Moon of Ramadan

at the end of the holy month of Ramadan following the previous evening. The moon is first seen once the sky is clear. Many factors including the position of the observer and the weather, and distracting city lights, can affect the common since many people see the crescent, especially in the city.

The crescent moon is: 18 December 1998. The moon and sun are all visible in the sky. The "astrological" birth of the new moon is the time from the earth and it is not visible enough to be visible in the sky. It is possible to see the crescent moon with the naked eye, but it is not always absolute accuracy if the observer is looking from a particular

Merry Christmas

Presents and jingle bells all the way

By Ghassan Joha
 Star Staff Writer

MERRY CHRISTMAS. This is the greeting all Christians from all over the world will say to each other, on Friday 25 December. For many in the Christian community in Jordan, Christmas is not only for the family, but its about visiting friends and relatives above all, however, its about rebuilding spiritual bonds.

For many centuries, Christmas was celebrated by the singing of carols. From the first recounting of the story of the nativity, humans have celebrated the occasion with words, art and special foods.

The name Christmas comes from the old English term of "Cristes mæsse", which means "Christ's Mass." Later on, it developed as a Christian festival on 25 December, to signify the birth of Jesus Christ.

According to a Roman almanac, the Christian festivities of Christmas were first celebrated in Rome in 336 AD. However, in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, 7 January was designated to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

It was only during the 4th century that the 25 December was adopted as the date for the birth of Jesus Christ. Generally, the western and eastern churches followed suit, but there are still eastern churches who stick to the 7 January date.

The traditional customs connected with Christmas have developed from several sources coinciding with the celebrations of the birth of Christ.

In the Roman world, Saturnalia (which occurs a week before Christmas), was a time of merry making and exchange of gifts. But, the 25 December was also

regarded as the birth date of the Iranian mystery god Mithra, the Sun of Righteousness. On the Roman New Year which is 1 January, houses were decorated with greenery and lights, gifts were given to children and the poor.

German and Celtic "Yule" rites were added to these observances, when the Teutonic tribes penetrated into Gaul (old France), Britain and central Europe. Food and good bakeries, the Yule log and Yule cakes, greenery and fir trees, gifts and greetings all commemorated different aspects of this festive season.

Fires and lights, which are symbols of warmth and lasting life, have always been associated with the winter festival, both pagan and Christian.

Christmas traditions, such as sending cards and decorating trees, have similarly interesting backgrounds. The practice of sending Christmas cards, has been followed by all English-speaking countries,



and is growing in others.

Though wood engravers produced prints with religious themes in the middle ages, the first Christmas card, as the term is now understood, is believed to have been designed in England in 1843. The

design was of a family party, beneath which were the words: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you."

The Christmas tree is evergreen and decorated with lights and ornaments as a part of the season's festivities.

believed to be the religious feast day of Adam and Eve. They hung wafers on it to symbolize the host, and replaced later by Germans as a symbol of Christ. Meanwhile, the tree was introduced in

England in the early 19th century, and was popularized by the German Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. The Victorian tree was decorated with candles, and fancy cakes hung from the branches by ribbon and paper chains.

Christmas trees were the height of fashion by the 19th century in the United States, where German settlers brought them in as early as the 17th century. In the Far East, Christmas trees were introduced by US missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Many people over the world regard Christmas as a holy day and a holiday. For the birth of Jesus Christ was seen as bringing a new spirit of joy into the world. And for the children, what could be more exciting during this special time than a visit from Santa Claus?

The beloved image of Santa Claus as that fat, jolly, bearded old man who gives presents to all children is derived from the person of Sancta Nicolas, an austere looking fourth century Christian bishop from Myra, or Turkey in the modern ages.

He was a very popular saint among the Eastern Christians, and became known in the west as the patron saint of children. Through some fanciful elaboration of his kindness, folklore tradition about Santa Claus varies throughout the world.

Most children are taught to believe that Santa Claus lives far away in the North Pole, better known as Lapland. When Christmas day sets closer, he gathers his reindeers to take him on the sleigh around the world. World children often write letters to him, hoping for a special gift or a visit by him. Santa Claus has become such a popular figure that without him no Christmas would be complete.